MEANINGFUL MIGRATIONS

Characteristics, Patterns and Outcomes – The case of Teotitecos of Oaxaca, Mexico

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This thesis focuses on the migration of an indigenous Zapotec group from the town of Teotitlán del Valle, located in the southern state of Oaxaca, Mexico. The characteristics and patterns of Teotiteco migration are described and analysed. Furthermore, the possibility of migration transformations is discussed. The community's social structure, together with communal practises, is portrayed as affecting the patterns of Teotiteco migration. On the other hand, how migration may have an effect on these defining social and cultural practises is also discussed.

The research questions are: What are the migration patterns of Teotitecos like? How do transborder processes come to play in this context? What are the outcomes of migration for migrants and for communal life? Futhermore, to what extent can "migration transformations" be detected and analysed in this context?

The data for this thesis was gathered during a three-month fieldwork in the town of Teotitlán de Valle. Data consists mainly of thematic interviews and participant observation. Official state electoral documents are also used in the analysis.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is constructed upon theories of transnationalism and transborder processes, together with theories of (kin) relations. A meso level of migration analysis is favored and the relational approach to migration (by Thomas Faist, 2000) applied.

The analysis demonstrates how socio-economic factors, regional and global dynamics and cultural practices related to migration affect migration patterns of Teotitecos, and especially how these patterns of migration are maintained through (kin) relations. The analysis can be divided into three parts. Firstly, the characteristics of Teotiteco migration are indicated. Teotiteco migration is portrayed as life-cycle related and gendered. Secondly, migraton patterns are detected and the continuity of these patterns is attributed to the maintenance of relations between migrants and their kin, and more broadly between the places of emigration and destination. Thirdly, the possibility of migration transformations is discussed and the mechanisms of possible changes are found to be intricate and complex. Changes in migrant belonging and the questions of community membership and citizenship are discovered to be negotiated in multiple political and cultural contexts.

The results of the study demonstrate that in order to understand patterns of migration, the historical and social contexts, together with communal and cultural practices need to be examined.Transformation and change can only occur through the interplay of migrants and other actors, and locales of emigration and destination. By studying relations the implications and changes linked to migration can be better grasped. Examining migration patterns and the relations relating to these patterns can provide insight to how different communities deal with change and uncertainty. The study concludes that relations make up migration patterns and at the same time act as measures to maintain these patterns.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Migration, indigenous migration, migration patterns, transborderism, ethnography, United States of America, Mexico, labor migrations, citizenship, membership, cultural politics

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee Etelä-Meksikosta, Oaxacan osavaltiossa sijaitsevasta Teotitlán del Vallen kylästä lähtöisin olevia siirtolaisia, siirtolaisuuden erityispiirteitä, liikkuvuuden muotoja ja malleja sekä pohtii sosiaalisen muutoksen yhteyttä muuttoliikkeeseen. Tutkielmassa on selvitetty, kuinka yhteisön sosiaalinen rakenne sekä kulttuuriset piirteet muokkaavat ryhmän siirtolaisuutta ja siirtolaisia. Toisaalta tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan myös, kuinka muuttoliike muokata näitä sosiaalisia ja kulttuurisia toimintatapoja sekä siirtolaisia itseään.

Tutkielman tutkimuskysymykset ovat: Millaisia muotoja ja malleja ryhmän siirtolaisuudessa on? Kuinka ylirajaiset prosessit vaikuttavat muuttoliikkeeseen ja siirtolaisiin sekä kotipaikkaan? Mitä ovat muuttoliikkeen ja siirtolaisuuden seuraukset ja vaikutukset, sekä missä määrin voidaan havaita muuttoliikkeen tuomia muutoksia lähtöpaikassa tai siirtolaisissa?

Tutkielman aineisto on kerätty kolmen kuukauden etnografisen kenttätyön aikana Teotitlán del Vallen kylässä, Oaxacan osavaltiossa Etelä-Meksikossa. Tärkeimpinä metodeina on käytetty osallistuvaa havainnointia ja temaattisia haastatteluita. Myös osavaltion virallisia asiakirjoja on hyodynnetty tutkimuksessa.

Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys rakentuu ylirajaisuusteorioista sekä sukulaisuusteorioista. Suhteiden tärkeyttä korostetaan ja muuttoliikettä pyritään käsittelemään sosiaalisten ja symbolisten suhteiden kautta. Tutkielmassa käytetään Thomas Faistin (2000) esittämää mallia (relational approach).

Tutkielman analyysi osoittaa, että siirtolaisen oma sosio-ekonominen tausta ja tilanne, lähtöyhteisön asema alueellisessa ja globaalissa dynamiikassa, ja toisaalta siirtolaisuuden yhteyteen syntynyt kulttuuri vaikuttavat siirtolaisuuden muotoihin. Tutkielman analyysi jakautuu kolmeen osaan. Ensiksi, analyysi osoittaa millaisia piirteitä tutkittujen muuttoliike saa ja ilmentää. Toiseksi, näiden piirteiden osoitetaan yhdessä yhteisön kulttuuristen ja sosiaalisten käytänteiden ja rakenteiden kanssa tuottavan ylläpidettäviä siirtolaisuuden ja yhteydenpidon malleja. Tämä yhteydenpito nähdään erityisesti sukulaissuhteiden, mahdollistamana, määrittämänä ja ylläpitämänä. Kolmanneksi, analyysi pohtii muuttoliikkeen ja yhteisöllisen muutoksen suhdetta todeten sen monimutkaiseksi ja monimuotoiseksi. Muuttoliike, siirtolaisuus ja näihin yhdistettävät kysymykset kuulumisesta, jäsenyydestä, kansalaisuudesta ja kansallisuudesta nähdään osana jokapäiväistä strategista neuvottelua, jota siirtolaiset käyvät ympäristönsä ja ympärillään olevien ihmisten sekä yhteisöjen kanssa.

Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että siirtolaisuuden mallien ymmärtämiseen tarvitaan laajempi käsitys lähtöyhteisön taustasta, historiasta sekä sosiaalisista ja kulttuurisista toimintatavoista. Muutosta voi tapahtua vain siirtolaisten, muiden toimijoiden sekä lähtö- ja määränpääpaikkojen vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimuksessa todetaan sosiaalisten suhteiden olevan siirtolaisuuden piirteiden ja mallien rakennusaineita, samaan aikaan kun ne ovat keinoja, joiden avulla näitä samaisia siirtolaisuuden malleja ylläpidetään.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Muuttoliike, siirtolaisuus, ylirajaisuus, etnografia, Amerikan Yhdysvallat, Meksiko, alkuperäiskansat, työperäinen maastamuutto, kansallisuus, kansalaisuus

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Abbreviations

CONAPO	Consejo Nacional de Población (National Population Council)
CONEVAL	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Politics)
DIGEPO	Dirección General de Población de Oaxaca (The Population Directorate of Oaxaca)
HTA	Hometown Association
IEEPCO	Instituto Estatal Electoral y de Partipacíon Ciudadana de Oaxaca (The Electoral Institute of the State of Oaxaca)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (National Institute of Statistics and Geography
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
UN	The United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
U.S.	United States of America

Glossary

Artesanias	Artesan handicrafts, here mostly woven woollen rugs
Asamblea	Community assembly where community decision making takes place
Ayuntamiento	Community government branch
Cargo	Refers to a specific position or activity within the customary law system
Compadrazgo	Form of ritual kinship
Comunero	Common-property rights holder, member of the community
El Norte	The north, referring to The United States of America
Fiesta	A party or festivity
Guelaguetza	Form of mutual aid, reciprocal exchange of goods and labor. delayed exchanges of equivalent goods or services in equivalent context
Jefes de seccíon	Neighbourhood section chiefs
La Migra	US Border Patrol
Las Posadas	Spanish for "lodging", or "accommodation". A nine-day celebration with origins in Spain, now celebrated chiefly in Mexico, Guatemala and portions of the Southwestern United States. Rememberance for the story of Mary and Joseph acquiring accommodation before the birth of Jesus Christ. Celebrated 16.-24. Dec
Mano de obra	Wage labor, here to make handicrafts for a merchant as a laborer
Mayordomía	Obligatory sponsorhip of ceremonial activities to honor the saints, most important religious cargo position
Mayores de vara	Assistants to the police commander
Mescal	A distilled alcoholic beverage made from the maguey plant (a form of agave, Agave americana) native to Mexico
Oportunidades	A government welfare program
Paisano	A person from the same town or country
Presidente Municipal	Municipal President
Regidore	Officer

Respet	Zapoteco for respect, also a feature of traditional communal structure
Síndico	A trustee of the municipal president
Tapete	Woollen rugs made by Teotitecos with different colorings and designs, major article of Teotiteco textile industry
Tequio	Communal labor. The base of the customary law system. Every citizen of should work for his/her community.
Topil	Cargo position in the ayuntamiento, equivalent to un-armed police force, topiles carry wooden sticks that symbolize authority
Usos y Costumbres	System of customary law, accepted by the state of Oaxaca, giving indigenous villages autonomy to govern themselves

1 Introduction

Human migration is as old as humanity itself. Forms and patterns of migration have varied through time and there is both continuity and transformation in migratory movements. What makes today's migration special is its scale. Globally, there were 232 million international migrants in 2013 (United Nations DESA 2013). Between 1990 and 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide rose by over 77 million or by 50 per cent. The sheer enormity of the scale of international migration lends itself to the claim of relevance of migration studies.

Furthermore, in 2013, over 51 per cent of all international migrants in the world were living in ten countries. The largest number of international migrants resided in the United States of America: 46 million in 2013, equal to nearly 20 per cent of the world's total. Between 1990 and 2013, Mexico-United States was the largest bilateral migration corridor in the world. Nearly 500,000 international migrants born in Mexico added to the population of the United States each year. As of 2013, approximately 11.6 million Mexican immigrants resided in the United States, up from 2.2 million in 1980, and Mexicans accounted for 28 percent of the country's 41.3 million foreign born (United Nations DESA 2013.)

The town of Teotitlán del Valle is located just a step aside from the Pan-American highway in the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico. Luckily, Teotitlán del Valle is not one of the infamous ghost towns deserted by a wave of emigration. To the contrary it comes across as a vivid little town with picturesque scenery. However, migration remains significant for many Teotitecos, regardless whether they have migrated themselves or not. Teotitecos and other indigenous Oaxacans do not make up the archetype of the Mexican migrant in the United States. Oaxacans have only relatively recently started to migrate up north in considerable numbers. Oaxacan migration did not grow rapidly until the late 1980s. This is likely to be one of the reasons why Oaxacan migration still remains an understudied phenonmenon in comparison to the migrations from other parts of Mexico. While there is a rich body of work on migration from Mexico's central, western and northern states (including, Durand et al. 2001; Kanaiaupuni and Donato 1999; Massey et al. 1994), there are only few studies that

describe new migrations from Mexico's southern states, like Oaxaca. This thesis addresses the question Oaxacan migration by looking at the migration of Teotitecos.

1.1 Objectives and Relevance of the Study

Scholarship on Mexican migration to the United States, as extensive and broad as it is, still lacks studies on specific indigenous migrations. These migrations tend to come from areas that have entered the U.S-Mexico migration story relatively late on, such as indigenous migration from the sourthern state of Oaxaca where my field is also located. Lacking sensitivity of the indigenous factor, the scholarship has remained largely centered on *mestizo* migrants and the socio-economical issues related to their integration or non-integreation into the U.S. society.

This thesis investigates how communal and cultural practices are shaped by processes of transborder migration and migrants, and how communal and cultural practices, in turn, shape patterns of mobility and the people involved in this mobility, in other words the migrants. This thesis constructs its argument by characterizing and analyzing a case of a specific migration, the Teotiteco one. My informants had all migrated to the United States and only few had moved within Mexico before migrating to the U.S. Therefore, my focus is on international, more specifically transborder, migration.

I consider how Teotitecos transform cultural categories and interpretive frameworks as they reproduce them in new contexts. Throughout the thesis I investigate the interplay of mobility and rootedness, cultural tradition and transformation. I also explore the role that migrant and nonmigrant households play in their communities through the analysis of traditional reciprocal practices and participation in local governance processes. This thesis draws on scholarship of migration studies, especially on studies of transborder communities and indigenous migrations. Furthermore, it discusses ideas of cultural politics and politics of citizenship in relation to migration.

I use the expression:"meaningful migrations" to highlight the idea that migration is not only a phenomenon defined by shifting economic circumstances. Eventhough these factors remain ever so important in the process of migration, they need to be framed with other factors and also understood in relation to other phenomena affecting the process of migration. Migration is to be interpreted as including a myriad of meanings

and relating to the interplay of tradition and change, advantage and disadvantage, economic opportunities and imaginaries. Furthermore, migration can also to some extent be viewed as a vessel for the travelling of meanings, in other words, migration of meanings. However, to be noted is that migration is not an actor. Thus, it can only mediate meanings that get attached to it in complex interplays between people and places.

1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

My formulated researh questions are: 1) *What characterizes, drives and sustains Teotiteco migration? In other words, what are the migration patterns of Teotitecos like?* 2) *How do transborder processes come to play in this context?* 3) *What are the outcomes of migration for migrants and for communal life? Futhermore, to what extent can "migration transformations" be detected and analysed in this context?*

This study is based on a few basic assumptions and hypotheses which are as follows: Migration decisions are framed as economic, but at the same time economic push and pull theories are rejected as too restricted and simple in explaining the intricacies of the migration process. Moreover, if transnational migration exists, migrants are expected to retain ties to their origin communities and natal households. Thus, a decline in migrant participation in the community practices should not be found, but rather building on social networks and traditional associations should continue, and the migrants and migrant households should remain integrated in their origin communities.

I agree with Falconi (2011) is suggesting that in order to be a member of a transborder community, migrants need to be especially aware of the ways to maintain continuity across space, and especially across social and geographic divides (Falconi 2001, 7; 311). Indigeneity emerges a significant factor in this process since indigenous migrants, like Teotitecos, have historically been marginalized in Mexico. As these people then migrate to the U.S, they constitute a minority within a minority.

I also maintain that certain social and communal practices facilitate contact between the emigration community and migrants in their destinations. An investigation into the case of Teotiteco migration, together with other indigenous communities' migrations,

provides much-needed insight into migration studies of Mexicans in the United States as they portray how previously ignored factors, such as indigeneity and ethnic identity together with economic factors, emerge as defining in explaining characteristics of migration and patterns of mobility. However, it is to be noted that this thesis is not intended as a study of ethnic indentities, but of migration processes. It investigates only the connections between ethnicity and Teotiteco migration patterns. In building my argument, I draw on scholarship of migration studies, especially on studies of transborder communities and indigenous migrations and data from ethnographical fieldwork conducted in the town of Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca.

1.3 A Few Definitions

I wish to provide the reader with a few basic definitions of terms vital for the analysis and argument of this thesis. The following terms are defined in the simplest way possible to give the reader an idea of what is being discussed here. Some of the terms are elaborated in more detail later on in the course of this thesis.

Migrant – At the international level, no universally accepted definition for "migrant" exists. Applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products. For the purposes of this study and in this thesis the term of migrant is also applied to persons who are residing, will reside or have resided in a foreign country for a shorter period than a year.

International migration - The movement of a person or a group of persons, international border. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes. includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (IOM 2011).

Circular migration - Migrations where the migrants are expected to temporarily or permanently return to their countries of origin. In more detail: "The fluid movement of people between countries, including temporary or long-term movement which may be beneficial to all involved, if occurring voluntarily and linked to the labour needs of countries of origin and destination" (IOM 2011)

Naturalization - Granting by a state of its nationality to a non-national through a formal act on the application of the individual concerned. International law does not provide detailed rules for naturalization, but it recognizes the competence of every state to naturalize those who are not its nationals and who apply to become its nationals (IOM 2011).

1.4 Methodology, Data and Challenges

At the beginning of this thesis project I was sure to write a study of remittances of Oaxacan migrants. However, soon after I began conducting interviews, it became clear

that a narrow focus on remittances alone would not be most useful for my intentions to study Teotiteco migration. Simply put, people talked about remittances but only among other things that seemed to be of more relevance to them. Therefore, I decided to shift my focus and conducted rest of the interviews with a broadened focus on migration processes, and the possible changes that people thought migration had or would yield to them and to the lives of Teotitecos.

Data for this thesis was gathered over a course of a three-month ethnographic fieldwork in the fall of 2014, more specifically from September to December. The data consist mainly of interviews and participant observation. Additionally, data from the community museum was also analysed, together with official state electoral documents. The data is analyzed by using content analysis. The data was first coded by themes, and the themes were then more carefully examined.

I conducted 12 interviews altogether. The interviews varied in duration from 20 minutes to 2,5 hours. One informant was interviewed twice. All interviews, apart from one, were conducted in the town of Teotitlán del Valle. One interview was conducted in the city of Oaxaca. All interviews were recorded. I conducted thematical interviews with some preliminary questions, but tried to leave room for the informants' own descriptions and not steer their stories too much. This was incremental since I wanted to gather specifically *migrant stories*, not survey like data. I only included a few questions about the informants' backgrounds in the beginning of their interviews.

As already mentioned, I explore stories of migration, told by or about migrants. I mainly interviewed returnee migrants, but also families of migrants, migrants who resided permanently in the U.S. and were only visiting their home community, and non-movers, more specifically those ones who never left Teotitlán del Valle. My informants varied in age, gender, occupation and socio-economical status. The duration of their migrant journeys varied too. All but one of my informants originated from Teotitlán del Valle. One informant originated from another Zapotec community in Oaxaca but had moved to Teotitlán in her teens after marrying a Teotiteco.

I have decided to give more precise descriptions of some of my key informants and their backgrounds, as I feel this information gives my analysis the framing it requires. Therefore, I will include a list of my key informants:

Fernando – male, 58 years of age, married.
First migrated to the United States in the 1970s. Has citizenship of the U.S. by amnesty. Resides permantly in the U.S. but has made a variety of visits to Teotitlán with different intervals and varied lenghts of stay, but has not returned permantly. At the time of inteview was visiting with his parents, who also reside permanently in the U.S.

Rigoberta – female, 47 years of age, married with 3 children.
Resides in Teotitlán del Valle. Husband and children currently residing in the U.S. Migrated in the U.S with her family, but has returned to Teotitlán. No citizenship of the U.S.

Gabriela – female, 46 years of age, single with no children.
Has spent almost 30 years in the United States. At the time of the interview has returned to stay in Teotitlán for a longer period, but unsure of the lenght of her stay. U.S. citizen by amnesty.

Gloria – 69 years of age, married, 2 children.
Spent over 30 years in the United States. Now returned to Teotitlán to retire with her husband. Children residing in the U.S. U.S citizen by amnesty.

Rafael – 28 years of age, single with no children.
Spent 10 years in the United States but now returned to Teotitlán to work in a family business of shopkeeping. No U.S. citizenship.

Gerardo – 55 years of age, married with two children.
Lived in the United States for several years in his twenties and thirties. Still visits the U.S. regularly on business trips for his artesan business.

Arturo – 40 years of age, married with children.
Spent a few years working in the U.S. and making several trips back and forth until returning to Teotitlán to start a family.

I am aware of the challenges and limitations of my data. The informants were mostly selected by chance, but some were recommended to me by communal servicemen, conducting their service with the municipio at the time of my fieldwork. One of the men helping me confessed that he mostly arranged interviews with women for me, since he thought it would be easier to connect between women. Fortunately, I was able to get interviews also with men, and thererofe the gender distribution of my informants remained quite balanced. Due to the relatively short duration of my fieldwork, I was not able to select my informants without this external help. All of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. I had prepped my language skills before conducting the interviews but sometimes still could not be sure of some of the expressions used by my informants. However, I have worked with a native Spanish speaker to confirm my

interpretations. Still I must stress that all possible misconceptions due to language differences, are of the authors fault only.

Pseudonyms are used for all the informants to ensure their anonymity. I have had to omit some details to make sure the informants are not identified as themselves. This is due to the small size and tightly knit nature of the Teotiteco community. Especially, some of the details in stories by pioneer migrants, would probably reveal the identity of the informant in question. All informants were notified of the use of their stories in a thesis project and the premises of this thesis were made as clear as possible. Still it remains doubtful whether people realized how I would use the information gathered from their interviews. Yet again, due to the short duration of my fieldwork, it is likely that I remained very much of an outsider to the community, although I gained access to places many outsiders, like tourists, usually do not. On the first day of my fieldwork, I presented myself to the municipal authorities, including the municipal president, and gained an official research permit from the community. This provided insurance for me in case I would have had trouble with the state officials or some other actors.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. After this brief introduction I present the theoretical framework for the thesis at hand. My aim is to discuss several theoretical viewpoints in more depth later on in the chapters, together with the analysis of my data. In the second chapter, however, I discuss theories of mobility, transnationalism and translocality, and relations. I also locate earlier studies on the subject by briefly examining the history of Mexican migration to the United States and discussing the role of indigeneity in studies of Mexican migration.

Chapter 3 introduces the field, the selected community of Teotitlán del Valle and locates it into the Oaxacan context. The community structure, communal functions, traditional and ritual institutions, in connection to the community labor and class structure are also discussed in more depth. Teotitlán is portrayed as an artesan community and livelihoods are considered deeply intertwined with the whole community structure. Craftmaking is presented as being a cultural and a social, as well as an economically significant project for the community and its habitants.

In chapter 4, I turn to examine Teotiteco migration more closely. I draw up a picture of what the Teotiteco migration is like, what kind of activities migrants take and who the migrants actually are. I adress the nature of migrant livelihoods with mainly economic but also other, more complicated, motives. I also touch upon the phenomenon of adventurous migrations, migrating for gaining new experiences, and discuss migration motives in the context of life cycles. Finally, I briefly discuss the gendered nature of Teotiteco migration.

Chapter 5 covers migration processes and the significance of migration patterns. In these chapters I delve into the discussion of translocalities in more detail. I begin by examining continuities of Teotiteco migration. I discuss the idea of a culture of migration and raise a few characteristics of communal life that may be facilitating migration for Teotitecos. Furthermore, I discuss migration imaginaries, hopes and dreams of making a better life for one and one's family. I examine how Teotiteco transborder lives are lived, the connections made and re-made, social and kinship networks utilized and developed. Moreover, the role of remittances is discussed. More broadly, this section highlights the importance of relations in shaping the migration process.

In chapter 6, I focus my attention on the outcomes of migration for both Teotitecos (migrants and non-migrants), and the community of Teotitlán de Valle. I ponder on the role of migration processes in the communal debates over tradition and communal life. I also examine whether migration is regarded as a threat to life as it is curretly known in Teotitlán. I then proceed to discussing issues of migrant belonging and agency, in the framework of cultural politics and politics of citizenship. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by gathering the main arguments and making some concluding remarks.

2 Theoretical Framework and Earlier Studies

I begin by drawing up a scene of theoretical discussion connected to my selected area of interest, migration.This study takes part in the discussion of how do social migrant spaces emerge and function, and how they are maintained. The connections migrants have to both their places of origin or to their destinations are not forgotten or automatically downplayed in the course of these mobilities. What can be detected are according to Thomas Faist "multi-stranded ties that may give rise to cyclical exchange between the emigration and immigration countries, including not only migrants but also material goods, ideas, information, symbols and cultural practices" (2000, 9).

2.1 Transnationalisms and Translocalities

Anthropology, it is often suggested, is a discipline that studies big issues in local places. Nevertheless, the concepts of local places have become increasingly problematized in recent anthropological discussion. The increased interest on migration has grown to produce heaps of research and information on emigration communities during the last two decades. Anthropologists have depicted the positives as well as the negatives of emigration and immigration.This thesis shares its underlying assumption with many other studies. It regards migration as a process in which the migrants build, develop and maintain intricate social relations that in turn link the migrants as part of their communities of origin (as e.g. Glick Schiller et al. 1992, 1995).

The discussion on transnationalism, and more broadly on transcending borders and boundaries, links itself into this thesis in many ways. *Transnationalism* has emerged as an essential concept in social science when migration is discussed. Steven Vertovec (2009) has condensed the definition of transnationalism as follows: "sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation-states" (Vertovec 2009, 66). Thus, *a transnational space* can be seen to emerge between migrants and the ones staying in the emigration communities (ibid. 66). Researchers have suggested that in this transnational space, the social universe of the emigration community and its cultural traditions are combined with migrant realities, movement and the realities of the host countries (e.g. Eversole 2005; Lindley 2010; Lubkemann 2005). Therefore, the nation-state can no longer remain the automatic actor in organizing economic, political and social life or the unquestioned reference point of research.

Early studies in the fields of sociology and migration studies portrayed the nation-state as containing the society. The migrants coming from outside of this society were viewed as disrupting the unity and wholeness of the society, at least until they fully integrated to their destinations. Models of diffusion and acculturation have proven to be quite problematic as researchers have found migrants actively engaging with their countries of origin and home communities and also frequently travelling back and forth between the two locations. Migrants do not just leave the past behind and struggle to integrate and merge into the host society (Click Schiller et al. 1992.) Moreover, for many migrants (people from communities that emphasize kinship as basis for social institutions and conduct) the space of significant kinship groups does not divide itself according to state or national political borders. This thesis will provide an example of this.

Theoretically, studies of migration in transnational social space denote a third generation of conceptualizing international migration (Faist 2000, 1). The first generation of research emphasized the push and pull nature of migration in the context of demographic developments in the age of industrialization. Push factors were analyzed together with pull factors of the immigration countries. Migration flows were viewed as distinct movements from emigration to immigration regions, with counter streams such as return migration. The update of this first perspective makes up the second generation of research. These studies, in turn, argued that both labor migration and regugee flows occur in structured relationships between emigration and immigration places, embedded in this structural dependence between core and periphery localities of the capitalist world economy. This was called the centre-periphery model of migration. (Faist 2000, 11.) The model was heavily influenced by the world-systems theory, of which developers Immanuel Wallerstein is most renowed (e.g. Wallerstein 1974). The third generation of studies at hand aims towards a recognition of the practices of migrants and stayers connecting both worlds and the activities of institutions (for example nation-states) that try to control these spaces. It is complementary to the earlier approaches (Faist 2000, 11-12).

The problematics of space has risen as a significant theme also within anthropology. It has been suggested that in order to understand migration we should also understand the community's relationship to a place. Nevertheless one must be careful not to essentialize the meaning of place/location. Drawing out cultural maps is problematic and even dangerous since by doing so cultures tend to be defined in a very essentializing fashion that encourages to divisions of cultures and human traits as if they were scientific specimens. Even anthropologists have taken for granted that people live in a certain place and that this place would have some sort of a natural relation to the culture and community of these people (Gupta & Ferguson 1999.) Culture cannot be seen as automatically tied to territory or communities as independent units with clear borders (ie. Kearney 1991; Rosaldo 1989). In the field of migrant research it has been suggested that instead of the concept of community another concepts of *transnational social space* and *transnational social field* should be more widely used exactly because the concept of community contains this undertone of territoriality (Pries 1999, 2001).

I follow Lynn Stephen (2007) in suggesting that we have to look beyond the national (and even the transnational) in order to understand the complete nature of the mobilities of these people and what people are moving between. Hence, the concept *transborder* (Stephen 2007), becomes useful in analyzing these migrations, since the borders the migrants cross are much more than national. Anthropologists and other social scientists have debate the conteptualizations of migrant activities, whether as networks, circuits or interlinked networks (Arturo Escobar's concept of *meshworks*[1]) Migrants take part in simoultaneuos processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and both of these processes are parts of the transnational community. Moving away from research made from the states' point of view does not necessarily mean forgetting localities or omitting the significance of sites or places in studying migrations processes, quite to the contrary. Linked networks and the discources originating from them are brought back to the shysical community of emigration by returnees. Consequently, also people who have never left the home communities enter the interlinked networks become parts of the discourses that are based far from where they reside (Stephen 2007, 272.) Of paramount

[1] In Escobar's meshworks, the idea is to understand interlinked networks and the total effect they can produce as a system. Meshworks are self-organizing and grow in un-planned directions, they are made up of diverse elements and they exist in hybridized froms with other hierarchies and meshworks. They do not impose uniformity and are determined by the degree of connectivity that enables them to become self-sustaining (Escobar 2003, 610-611 cited in Stephen 2007)

interest here are the relationships that social phenomena (like migration) and social institutions have to specific locations and between each other.

2.2 Relations and Levels of Analysis

On the background of the discussion on *transborder* networks and *translocal* connections remains the question on the significance of relations to people and communities. Again, anthropologists can offer valuable insight in studying these relations. The western view of individuals does not exist (at least not in the same way) everywhere. In many places the collective precedes the individual. Furthermore, collectives are often based on kinship. Kinship is a powerful force that extends from the home community to the diaspora and ties migrants to the social community in which the individuals serve the collective whole.

Relations arise as a significant analytical tool in this thesis. I shall use examples if the importance of relationships to migration outcomes in building my argument. Following relational approaches, anthropologists have claimed that migrants in diaspora are still parts of their home communities and not so much merely individualized migrant workers. Anthropological discussion of migration has problematized the view of migrants as "individual investors". Migrants can be socially active in the home communities even though they might not physically reside with the other community members. Belonging to a community does not necessarily require belonging to a certain place. The social organization of the community of origin (which is often based on kinship and collective institutions) does have an impact on migration patterns and for example to migrants' remittance behavior. Remittances can be seen as a tool or a path via which the migrants define their place, community membership and belonging (be that in the home community, diaspora, both or something in between) (Englund 2002).

There is a rich body of literature on migrant networks that offer plausible explanation for migration dynamics. Migrant networks become self-sustaining over time because of the social support that they provide to prospective migrants (e.g. Massey et al 1998). However, migration network analysis has its deficiencies. It does not explain relative immobility, nor does it account for how migrant networks come into being. What is needed is the connection of the structure of ties in networks, and the content of ties, in other words social capital (Faist 2000, 14.) Social capital is at the center of the

anthropological investigation. The consideration of social and symbolic ties – obligations, reciprocity, solidarity, and things that can be mobilized through these ties, such as resources of others, information and social control – is in the core of the discipline. Moreover, socal capital is location-specific. Local assets include economic resources (money or physical capital), human capital (education, vocational training and professional skills) and social capital (the content of ties and resources inherent in social transactions) (Faist 2000, 14-15.) Thus, we should study under which conditions these local assets are transferable and under which they are not, and when do they contribute to immobility or in contrast promote mobility, in other words, migration.

This thesis is theoretically heavily influenced by a relational approach presented by the anthropologist Thomas Faist. Faist (2000) formulates a specific approach to migration studies. He argues that network theory has attempted to portray itself as the theory trend to overcome the previous shortcomings of migration theories, however he concludes that network theory in fact is not a theoretically secure at all. Faist asserts that network theory is actually more of an empirical methodology than a substantive theory (2000, 16). He criticizes network theory of implicit theory assumptions that remain hidden and un-scrutinized by sholars. Furthermore, he critisizes network theory's most general claim that a particular network structure would have a specific effect on the actions of certain people participating in these webs of ties, that individual behaviours would be influenced through relationships if the individual interacts with others, as being over simplified, rigid and quite frankly preposterous (ibid. 16). This network theory's underlining assumption would quite efficiently rob people of their agency by suggesting that the position of a participant in a set of ties determines their behavior.

The relational approach can be applied to all levels of analysis (macro, meso or micro). This study nonetheless, concentrates on the meso level. The attempt here is try to understand the internal dynamics driving mobility and immobility, in other words the dynamics of leaving, staying and possibly returning. Therefore, the thesis also contains the assumption that migration can be analyzed as a matter of social and symbolic ties. The approach taken neither denies individual agency nor disregards macro-structures, but helps to appreciate the localized or territorialized, ambiguous and contradictory character of migrants' lives (Faist 2000, 17). The relational approach then builds on two guiding concepts: local assets and transnational social spaces. For example, this means

that chain and mass migration develop when social capital does not anymore function as a local asset but as a transnational transmission belt. Yet, once social capital is internationally transferable, adaptation in the immigration country or readaption in the emigration country proceeds on a new level – in transnational social spaces. What is to be noted is that, there is no linear reciprocal relationship between immigrant adaptation and ties within transnational spaces developing out of international migration (ibid. 17).

MICRO Values or desires and expectancies	**MESO** Collectives and social networks	**MACRO** Macro-level opportunity structures
Individual values and expectancies - improving and securing survival, wealth, status, comfort, stimulation, autonomy, affiliation, and morality	*Social ties* - strong ties among families and households - weak ties networks of potential movers, brokers and stayers; *Symbolic ties* - kin, ethnic, national, political, and religious organizations; symbolic communities *Content of ties – transactions* - obligations, reciprocity, and solidarity; information, control and access to resources of others	*Economics* - income and unemployment differentials *Politics* - regulation of spatial mobility through nation-states and international regimes: - political repression, ethnic, national and religious conficts *Cultural setting* - dominant norms and discourses *Demography and ecology* - population growth; - availability of arable land - level of technology

Fig. 2.1. The three levels of migration analysis. Figure adapted from Faist (2000, 31).

2.3 Mexican Migration: Previous Studies Located

For the purposes of this thesis, I find necessary to establish an overview of earlier scholarship of Mexican migration studies and theoretical discussions related specifically to these studies. This shall also serve as historical background for my analysis. It will give an important reference point in characterizing the specific features of Teotiteco migration.

One of the largest sustained international flows of migrants in the world is from Mexico to the United States of America (Massey and Taylor 2004, Massey et al. 2005). As of

2010, 96% of Mexican communities had sent members across the border. Meanwhile, the United States was home to 11.4 million Mexican migrants. More than 10 million of these migrants did not own citizenship rights, 54% of them were undocumented and another 34% were living as legal permanent residents (OECD 2006; Gonzalez-Barrera et al. 2013). In the course of the 2000s, the U.S. government has significantly increased policing and deportations of non-citizens. Mexican migrants have been excluded and shoved into an underclass that is politically, economically and socially inferior. At the same time the Mexican government and political parties increasingly recognized that the nation's future quite frankly depended on migrants, turning to migration as a vehicle for development (Fitzgerald 2009).

The beginning of Mexican migration to the U.S. is simply impossible to define. It is a common belief among Mexicans that "we did not cross the border but the border crossed us". Mexican migration to the U.S. and especially the soaring numbers of undocumented migrants living in the U.S. is a result of a combination of U.S.policies and U.S.-promoted liberalization on the Mexican side (e.g. Sassen 1990; Durand, Massey & Parrado 1996). These policies together with the ongoing economic transformations (neo-liberal reforms), unbalanced and shook the basis of rural subsistence economy of Mexican villages and therefore modified their population into a huge low-wage workforce in the United States.

The scene of the Mexico-U.S migration system was first staged in Mexico in the 1960s and 70s when the nation's ruling party, the PRI[2] (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*), began to "modernize" Mexico with neo-liberal reforms. The support from small farms was withdrawn and investments were made into industry and agroindustry to promote large-scale growth. For most of the 20th century, small farmers in Mexico had made their living by farming un-irrigated land thanks to government price supports for basic crops (Taylor et al. 2005). From the 1970s onward the Mexican government however (with U.S. counsel) started to deregulate agriculture, withdraw subsidies and open markets to mass-produced U.S. food (e.g. Singer & Massey 1998).

[2] The country's preeminent political organization from 1929 until the early 1990s. The PRI held power in the country for 71 years, first as the National Revolutionary Party, then as the Party of the Mexican Revolution. In terms of power, it was second only to the president, who also serves as the party's effective chief. Until the early 1980s, the PRI's position in the Mexican political system was hegemonic.

After what was first deemed as successful economic reform Mexico then faced a debt crisis in August 1982. This was due to overspending and a drop in world oil prices, on which Mexico relied. The government decided to devalue the currency 100%, which cut the real wages in half (Zabin 1992). The financial bailout, which was led by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the U.S. technological expert advocates, and the structural adjustment that followed ended the era of Mexican protectionism, reduced public sector spending and eliminated price supports for basic crops (including corn) (White, Salas & Gammage 2003). These reforms greatly lowered the prices at which farmers could sell their produce and therefore exacerbated poverty everywhere in the nation, but particularly in rural areas of Oaxaca, where many villages degraded. The villages, which were already taken as "backward" in the eyes of Mexican leaders, (Fox & Aranda 1996) became more and more marginalized.

The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) and subsequent investments in border security were a turning point that contributed to another wave of Mexican migration. IRCA legalized close to 3 million unauthorized migrants, including 2.3 million Mexicans, in return for tougher border enforcement and penalties for American employers who hired unauthorized workers. As crossing the border became more difficult, and as economic changes in the United States opened additional jobs to low-skilled foreign workers, immigrants began to settle permanently, bringing their families to live in the United States (Zong & Batalova 2014.)

Before 1986, most migrants sought to work abroad temporarily in order to manage risks and acquire capital for a specific goal or purchase back home. By sending one family member abroad for a limited period of foreign labor, households could diversify their sources of income (thus managing risks) and accumulate savings from their United States earnings (thus acquiring capital). In both cases, the fundamental objective was to return to Mexico and make life better with the assets earned abroad (Durand, Massey & Parrado 1996.) IRCA ruptured this dream in several ways. Firstly, legalization offered migrants the prospect of a secure existence north of the border during a period of exceptional economic and political turmoil at home. The programs, connected to IRCA that promised naturalization for migrants, virtually *required* undocumented migrants who had formerly circulated back and forth to remain in the United States until their

petitions for legalization were resolved. Rather than slowing down the rate of undocumented entry, IRCA seems only to have succeeded in transforming a seasonal flow of temporary workers into a more permanent population of settled legal immigrants (ibid.)

Mexico extended the market reforms in the early 1990s. The banking system was privatized, government firms were sold, markets deregulated and Mexican villages' communal rights to their land refuted. The private sale of communal land was permitted which fueled the privatization of 50% of Mexican land (Fox 1995). Government agencies dedicated to urging (sometimes rather coercing) communal landholders to title their lands. Then in 1994, the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada was negotiated. This further decreased trade barriers and tariffs, and more importantly for this case, allowed the import of U.S. corn, which was still subsidized and therefore much cheaper than the Mexican one. From 1993 to 1995, real prices for corn in Mexico dropped 26%. By 2003, subsistence farmers in villages earned a mere 11% of what they had earned just a decade before. So working at a loss, nearly a million households stopped growing corn for sale (Stephen 2007, 125) For their own consumption, it was cheaper to buy imported corn from the States than to grow it themselves. With no viable means to continue making a living from farming, many Mexicans, Oaxacans, and Teotitecos opted to make the risky journey to the other side of the border to find work in the U.S agricultural sector. Clearly migration was no concern for the negotiators of NAFTA, since no steps to prepare for the increasing volume of migration seem to be taken.

The migration from Mexico to the United States has evoked interest in scholars and government institutions on both sides of the border for almost a century. The American sociologist Emory Bogardus together with the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio are regarded as the pioneers of studying Mexican migration to the U.S. Both began working on the subject in the 1920s and 30s. The scolarhip gained new momemtun and increasing attention with the advent *Bracero program*[3] in the 1950s and 60s. Since the

[3] A series of laws and diplomatic agreements for the importation of temporary contract laborers from Mexico to the United States. The program allowed Mexican nationals to take temporary agricultural work in the United States. Over the program's 22-year life, more than 4.5 million

early 1970s, academic analyses of Mexican migration to the United States have become a sizeable scholarly literature. Anthropologists too have a long-standing interest on Mexican migration. Anthropologists' interest in Mexican migration seems to have risen from the 1980s onward.

Existing scholarship has largely understood the relationship between Mexico and the United States (as well as global migration more broadly) in terms of immigration, the act of coming to live permanently in a foreign country. As a result, the questions of why do people leave, and how do they (or whether they do) integrate into their destinations. Each process then, gets treated as individual and separated from the other. Thus, migration becomes something linear and inherently linked with the notion of progress.

The recent approaches of political economy and migrant transnationalism help to break down the impact model of migration. The former challenges the push-pull separation that has characterized most literature on immigration by arguing that migration reflects the historical production in inequality between underdeveloped emigration countries and industrialized receiving countries (e.g. Kearney 1995). This approach suggests that migration is organized by the unfair policies destination states, whose goal is not integration but to gain low-wage working force (e.g. Sassen 1990). Furthermore, theories of transnationalism steer attention to the way migrants sustain and maintain transborder ties (e.g. Levitt 2001). Still, political economic theories mostly discuss the macro-level phenomena, and do not really explain differences in the ways communities make meaning of migration in their particular contexts. At the same time, transnationalism defines home-relations primarily in terms of activities and flows (especially of remittances) and therefore omits politically-charged ways that different communities define the meaning of well-being and thus sustainable livelihoods.

2.4 Indigenous Mobility

The Mexican industrial boom of the 1930s encouraged, and in even in some cases forced, indigenous mass migration from the rural villages to the newly formed industrial centers (Gabbarot & Clarke 2010). Later the implementation of the North American

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Mexican nationals were legally contracted for work in the United States. The Bracero program fed the circular migration patterns of Mexicans into the U.S.

Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the neo-liberal economic approach that the Mexican government had taken on [4] put pressure on indigenous people to find new areas of migration in export-agricultural regions the southern and northern Mexico (Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California and Veracruz). The north-western area of the country where the largest export-agricultural zone of Mexico is located has seen increased settlement of indigenous population. This locus has created a stepping-stone for international border crossing mainly for indigenous men (Velasco Ortiz 2005). Mexican indigenous migrants in the U.S, largely undocumented, have slowly replaced the Mexican *mestizos* who found better paid jobs, particularly in the service sector (Hulshof 1991). Studies have demonstrated that since the 1980s, over 100,000 indigenous Mexicans were in the United States working. Many worked the fields of Californian farms but also more and more migrants found employment in Florida, New York, Illinois and Oregon, increasingly in the service sector (e.g. Stephen 2007.)

Within the migration studies field, indigenous people have often not been considered separately from others born in the same country (for example Zapotecs from Mexico are regarded simply as "Mexicans" in the United States despite language and cultural differences). Mexican migrants are still largely thought of as an ethnically homogenous group, not least in the eyes of official immigration policy. In the mid-twentieth century, studies on Mexican migration to the U.S. identified all Mexican migrants as *mestizo* peasants expelled from their farms looking for better living conditions from the U.S side of the border (Cardoso 1980, Galarza 1964, Gamio 1971, see also Gravitt 2008). There are records of Mexican indigenous men migrating to the United States under the Bracero program as early as in the 1930s (Bogardus 1934). The Bracero Programme was a bilateral agreement between Mexico and U.S. for the importation of temporary Mexican labourers, and ran from 1942 to 1964. Eventhough, a new string of studies within the Mexico-U.S. migration scholarship has emerged with an interest in investigating and shedding light to the importance of the indigenous factor, indigenous migration still remains understudied.

[4] Mexican government's neoliberal reform aimed to reduce the rural proportion of the national population. A significant amount of the rural population was supposed to move to the cities, in order to keep industrial wages down, and to attract foreign investment.

The arrival of the Europeans and the colonization process propelled native people of the Americas to a path of economic marginalization, social demoralization and impoverishment. They became ethnically inferior, viewed as naïve, childlike and primitive in their technology and cooperative. The native people were to be educated by their "discoverers", and to be taken advantage of (Nagel 2003, 67.) Still today indigenous people in Mexico are associated with rural life in the country side, with folkloric tradition and viewed as "vestiges of the past" or even being the "living expressions of barbarity" (Bengoa 1985, p. 135 cited in Richards 2005). This means that indigeneity is not recognized as a present element of the Mexican. It is something that belongs to the past, to the age of the great civilizations of the Maya, Aztec and other "Indians". Furthermore, permance and immobility were viewed as characterizing features of indigenous people (de la Cadena & Starn 2007; Yescas Angeles 2008). Due to this categorization, indigenous people could not be recognized as subjects of migration.

The Mexican Revolution in 1910 yielded the creation of a modern national identity that took a mixed-race character: the *mestizo*[5]. The *mestizo* emerged as an official discourse of nation formation which denied colonial forms of ethnic oppression by constructing an intermediate category for the subject and interrelating the subject as "the citizen" (Mallon, 1995). In the official construction of *mestizo* everyone was eligible to become one, but in reality this still meant a construction of an ethnic boundary through cultural moves, the most prominent one being speaking only Spanish instead of an indigenous language, and ethnic transitions to symbolically cease to be indigenous and become "white" (e.g. Wade 2005.) As modern Mexico, and more importantly the modern Mexican state, constructed and celebrated mixed-race identity as the new Mexican identity, the indigenous people continued to be segregated with their long history of exploitation and domination.

At the international level, no definition of these groups has been agreed upon. The non-binding UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the General Assembly adopted in 2007 and is supported by 143 countries, does not contain a

[5] In Mexico, mestizo refers to the mix of European (mainly Spaniards) and indigenous people (Wade
2004).

definition. The exact number of indigenous people in Mexico is for the moment impossible to know. The only indicator used to estimate the indigenous population is to compile statistics on ethno-linguistic groups. However, being defined by only language is problematic. The indigenous people have been urged, even demanded, to take on the common tongue, Spanish. Some groups have conformed to this claim to the extent that they have almost entirely lost their ability to speak their indigenous language. The government's insistence on language as a defining feature of indigeneity has placed the indigenous people into a limbo-like status. Their obedience has backfired. They have tried to conform in the hopes of becoming recognized, but ultimately they have eroded the qualities that their recognition nowadays depends on.

In the eyes of the Mexican government these groups share cultural and political characteristics that are particular to indigenous people, for example style of government and tradition. According to the 2010 census (INEGI 2010) around 6.9 million people speak an indigenous language, that is 6 % of the Mexican population, but 15.7 million people considered **themselves** indigenous, that is around 15 % of the population. Even though the indigenous can be viewed as a relatively large population, the Mexican economic and social model still has almost no place for indigenous people. After more than 500 years since the European conquest, the Mexican government keeps on making policies (educational, cultural and social) that hide and discriminate against an important part of the population. These people are then restricted to work as the agro-export labor force or as "tourist attractions" (Fox & Rivera Salgado 2004). Indigenous people are often considered to be second-class citizens on top of being "indios" and "primitive" (e.g. Castellanos & Boehm 2008).

In this thesis, I use the term *indigenous* people instead of countryside or rural Mexican. My account focuses on migrants from a community that very clearly defines **itself** as indigenous and also strives to emphasize their specific indigeneity to those outside the community as also within the community itself (discussed more closely in Cahpter 3). I follow Fenton (1999) in that indigenous people have "real or perceived differences of ancestry, culture and language" which are mobilized in social transactions and interactions, and therefore differ from the rest of the Mexican (*mestizo*) society. The possible physical differences between indigenous people (height, skin colour et cetera) are acknowledged but still denied as determinants of indigenous people's life courses

and outcomes. Of importance to my argument are the social meanings attributed to being indigenous in Mexico. Indigeneity is not treated as an individual category, but rather an experienced and constructed ethnic identity. In this light, what become significant are the social meanings of ethnic difference rather than the differences themselves.

As already established, of special importance to my argument in this thesis is to regard indigeneity as more than a static category of definition. I follow, cite and agree with studies that have given emphasis on indigenous identities as *made*. By this I mean the ways in which these identities and indigeneity is performed and used, often strategically. Shaylih Muehlmann (2008) has depicted indigenous identity and its strategical and subversive use by examining native language use of the indigenous Cucapa. The Cucapa strategically use the expectation that as indigenous people they must be able to speak native language. Muehlmann describes how a few decades earlier not speaking Spanish may have impeded the Cucapas' legal negotiations, but now they are finding that a lack of fluency in their indigenous language and traditions is increasingly delegitimizing their current legal claims (ibid.). Not surprisingly, they are viewed as incompetent in their own language, which was discouraged during assimilation. Yet, Muehlmann reports that the Cucapa deploy their indigenous language in ways that at the same time challenge this assessment and demonstrate that language is a superficial identity marker (ibid.). I agree with Muehlmann in that language is only a superficial identity marker and therefore problematic. Nonetheless, language plays an essential role in the strategical use of indigenous identity in Mexico. I shall return and elaborate on this theme of strategical indigeneity in my characterization of the Teotiteco migration (Chapters 3 & 4) and situate it as a factor that plays a role in affecting migration and migration outcomes (Chapters 5 & 6).

In this chapter, I have presented a framework for this thesis by discussing theoretical standpoints as they relate to the topic of this study. Moreover, I have briefly discussed the history of migration between Mexico and the United States and overviewed the existing scholarship. In the chapter that follows, I begin laying the basis for my analysis by presenting a detailed description of life in Teotitlán del Valle, the site of my ethnographic fieldwork.

3 Setting the Scene: Teotitlán del Valle

In what follows, I shall examine the characteristics of my chosen site of research, Teotitlán del Valle. This I do in order to form a basis for my argument and situate the argument into its context. I examine the characteristics of the community to understand the processes of Teotiteco migration, its outcomes and effects on both the community and the migrants as individuals. By examining migration in the selected community, I attempt to shed more light on the peculiar character of indigenous migration.

A crossing on the Pan-American higway is lined with little stalls selling mescal, the staple drink of Oaxaca made from the maguey cactus. The placement of these stalls might seem random at first but becomes apparent as well-reasoned as one continues from the crossing towards the little town of Teotitlán del Valle. The road leading to the town center is surrounded by grass fields until multicolored signs marketing Teotiteco handicrafts appear. Indeed, Teotitlán, located some 30 kilometres outside the city of Oaxaca, is one of the locations attracting most tourists in the Central Valley are. Hence, the placement of the mescal stalls.

Signs, adorned with patterns, family and business names, together with slogans both in English and in Spanish, line both sides of the road and become ever more frequent when one enters the town's main street named after Benito Juárez, the great Mexican president and national hero with Zapotec origin. The local stop for *colectivos* and taxis constitutes a place to socialize with other community members while waiting for a ride. By many standards the streets of Teotitlán are quiet apart from a few pick-ups and Nissan Tsurus, both endemic to Oaxacan transport. The town plaza and other main community buildings, such as the municipal house, the artesan market, and the community museum, are located two blocks from the main street. Again, signs guide visitors to this designated tourist area of the town. Almost all doorways in these blocks are adorned with textiles and other handicrafts available for sale. The combinations of brightly colored *artesanias* coupled with the equally brightly painted walls make for works of art themselves. The tourist appeal of the towns' aestethic is very apparent and the town centre is constantly under renovation to become even more appealing to the visitor's eye.

3.1 Teotitlán and the Oaxacan Context

Oaxaca is one of Mexico's most physically and culturally diverse states. Located in the Southwest portion of the country, with a long Pacific coastline, the state is the point where the Eastern Sierra Madre and the Southern Sierra Madre[6] come together. The resulting mountainous terrain has created a number of different microclimates that provide an astounding variety of flora and fauna. Current-day Oaxaca City, the state capital, lies in a high mountain valley. It and many locations in the surrounding valley and hillsides were important sites in early Mesoamerican civilization. Signs of the domestication of maize, dated to 3450 BC have been found in this valley. The valley was home to the Zapotec Empire (beginning around 100 BC), and later the Mixtecs (around 1000 AD), until the conquering Aztecs arrived (in 1450 AD) and finally the Spanish in 1521.

Contrasting the richness of nature and wildlife is the fact that Oaxaca is according to the Mexican government agency CONAPO (Consejo Nacional de Población), the third most economically marginalized state in Mexico. (CONAPO 2010). The state amounts for 3.3% of the total population of Mexico but produces only 1.5 % of the GNP. According to the CONEVAL (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Politica de Desarollo Social) (2010), in 2005, 38.1 % of the Oaxacan population was within the food poverty line. This percentage is much higher than the than the national average of 18.2 %. Oaxaca occupied the third place in being the poorest state in Mexico, just below the states of Chiapas and Guerrero, with 47 % and 42 % of people within the food poverty line. In the beginning of the 1970s (before the modern large-scale migration) up to half of the indigenous were illiterate, and 73 % of the state population lived in subsistence farming villages of 2500 people or less. At the same time as subsistence production plummeted, the indigenous population grew, producing shortages that provoked their situation even further and worse (Rivera-Salgado 1999). Even today 90% of Oaxacan agrarian population have income under subsistence level and most families are living through remittances, tourism and the government welfare program *Oportunidades* (Novo 2004).

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[6] Spanish for "mother mountain range". The Sierra Madre de Oaxaca is a mountain range in southern Mexico. It begins at Pico de Orizaba and extends in a southeasterly direction for 300 km until reaching the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Oaxaca's Mixtecs and Zapotecs were both historically excluded from the broader society, both economically and politically. Among Oaxaca's 16 indigenous groups, Zapotecs are the largest, at 32% of the indigenous population and Mixtecs the second, at 21%. Ethnic Mixtecs concentrate in one region of Oaxaca (the Mixteca), ethnic Zapotecs are more numerous and live in multiple regions, across which their social, political, and migration histories vary. Teotitecos are Zapotecs living in the Central Valley region, near the state capital Oaxaca. 33 % percent of the population speak an indigenous language and 58 % define themselves as indigenous (INEGI 2010.)

As long as indigenous villages delivered votes to the party that ruled Mexico from 1929 to 2000, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), they were allowed *de facto* autonomy to run their internal affairs. Meanwhile the villages' relative isolation made them able to retain unique collective political practices despite the huge society-wide transformations of the 20th century. These traditional collective practices remained dramatically different from more individualistic Western systems. Most villages and towns held collective titles to their land, granted by the Spanish crown during the colonial era. Indigenous self-governance was not formally recognized by the state of Oaxaca until 1995. Most indigenous villages still sustained participatory political practices in which they ran their own local governments. This meant that they made decisions regarding their communities in their own general assemblies.

Out of the 570 Oaxacan municipalities, 418 elect their body of governance by customary law (Vázquez Carcía 2011). The structure of the municipalities is an outcome on the kind of organization imposed on the native population during colonization, which continued after the Mexican Revolution Hernández-Diaz (2007). The communities were remote and their land of low value. Colonial intervention and state presence was more limited than in other parts of Mexico (which often relied on systems run by local strongmen, e.g. Kearney 1998). It can be argued that indigenous people were organized into self-governing municipalities to ease indirect rule (Greenberg 1995). Today, every town has its own specific characteristics that have been shaped by the communities' own social contexts and also by the interactions of the communities with local, national and international agents and arenas. Also the villages' law regimes vary based on these specific characteristics (such as religious customs and preferences, educational achievements, class structure, income level and migration). Of

specific interest here is how migration impacts the customary regimes and social realities and how these in turn affect migration.

Communities in the Central Valleys, such as Teotitlán del Valle, are relatively well off when compared to villages in more remote areas of the mountainous state. Central valley communities are linked to Oaxaca City through bus and taxi service and their local economies benefit from Oaxaca's labor market and tourist industry. But still, unfortunately, the economic infrastructure of these communities remains underdeveloped and the market for local labor is limited (DIGEPO 2010) Thus, there are few opportunities for wage labor, few doctors, poor schools and limited local access to market goods; important motivations for migration. Teotitlán del Valle was listed as a highly marginalized community statistics by DIGEPO (2010).

In Teotitlán, the biggest economic engines are traditional craft making of weaved textiles and remittances received from the United States. It is also noteworthy that Teotitlán is integrated with a complex global system of production, marketing and distribution which links the community with large importer-exporters of textile crafts based primarily in the United States and also to the consumers in the United States, Europe and all over the globe. I shall elaborate on this later on in this chapter but next I begin by discussing the structure of the community and its political organization.

3.2 Community Structure

Customary governance institutions play a key role in regulating the use and management of shared environmental, economic, and cultural resources, and collective action is a requirement for their formulation, implementation, and enforcement. Oaxacan villages have developed local-level social structures that differ widely even in nearby towns. This is the reason why it is fundamental for me to carefully discuss the special features of exactly the community that I have selected as my focus of study.

The town of Teotitlán del Valle operates under a system referred to as *Usos y Costumbres* (Ways and Customs). Contemporary Western governments define citizenship in terms of inalienable individual rights which have their basis on the the Enlightment's community contracts. Contrastingly, in *Usos y Costumbres* system, at

least in its ”pure” form, members earn their rights through participation and the fulfillment of mutual obligations (Kearney 1998; Hernández-Diaz 2007; Stephen 2007). The prototypical system requires all married men to serve the community. In Teotitlán the official service age is from 18-70 years but reality is more flexible. Women have no obligation to holding cargos or official communal posts. From the year 2000 onwards women have been allowed to take part in the assemblies. Still most of the women who do participate are widowed or participate to substitute their migrant husbands.

The obligations for all members include attending the general assemblies (in which all major decision are made on the town-level), taking part in communal labour known as *tequio* and serving unpaid civic posts in the municipal government known as *cargo*. These two social institutions define the system. They link community members with their communal resources and constitute the service that active and able-bodied *comuneros* (common-property rights holders) must provide in return for the benefits they receive from their membership in the community. Elected officials are accountable to assemblies rather than to the state or federal government, and assemblies are free to formulate and approve norms that govern life in their jurisdictions.

Under communal titles, land is transferrable only by birth or marriage, allowing members to pass on designated parcels within families but prohibiting them from selling it on the market (Nagengast & Kearney 1990). By undermining the importance of land, as well as the possibility of in-person political participation, migration has partly transformed the culture and politics of this system. Land ownership is no longer regulated merely by kinship ties. Thus, land can be more freely sold and bought. I shall elaborate on the issue of land and place further in my analysis.

The cargo and the tequio, as key collective-action institutions, thus play a critical role in village and community life across the Central Valleys and Sierra Norte[7] of Oaxaca. For this reason, they offer an excellent focal point for investigations into the sociocultural impacts of migration. Participation is a major part of the social structure. Participation is required to earn membership and rights in the community. By 2004, the

[7] La Sierra Norte de Oaxaca is a heavily wooded region in the state of Oaxaca, located north-east from the Central Valleys.

number of cargo positions in Teotitlán was approximately 250 (Stephen 2007, 56). Each independent household is required to provide cargo service every three years or so. The cargos are further divided into municipal cargos and other community cargos (IEEPCO 2003).The desicion-making body, the assembly of comuneros, appoints the cargo holders. *Ayuntamiento*, the community's govermental branch, includes *presidente municipal* (mayor), a *síndico*, *regidores* for cemetery, housing and marketplace; five *jefes de seccíon* (neighbourhood section chiefs, one for each neighbourhood), *primer vara* (police commander), *mayores de vara*, and finally ten *topiles*. Exept for the topiles, all also have suplentes. There are two paid positions in the ayuntamiento, the treasurer and the the secretary (IEEPCO 2003). In addition to these, cargo positions exist in different committees. The wide range of these comprise of committees for pre-school, the primary school, the secondary school, the health center, water and sewerage, irrigation, the church, fire fighting and so on. Moreover, committees and projects can de created on an ad hoc basis.

The rules of the Teotiteco Usos y Costumbres system are well documented by the community itself and also by the state electoral authorities. The obligations are extended to all residents. Residents do not need to be born Teotitecos to be considered as residents with obligations (interestingly however, the obligations are rarely extended to non-Mexican or "Westerners" living within the community borders). In the documents it is clearly stated that not fulfilling cargo or tequio obligations is regarded irresponsable. The community rules also demand appropriate behavior in community functions, and good conduct in assemblies. Not fulfilling tequio or cargo obligations is sanctioned. Officially, the sanctions vary from fining to even imprisonment. However, improsonment is likely to be effected only rarely with extreme cases of taking advantage of the community. Violence and disorder in the assemblies is also sanctioned by imprisonment (IEEPCO 2003). A member that does not fulfill their cargo position adequately might face rebuke and not gain elevation in rank that would facilitate their next position to be of more importance. Noteworthingly, not attending assemblies remains unsanctioned.

Community sanctions on residents can sometimes be harsh. This is illustrated by a story from an informant about what might happen if a request for service is turned down. I sat

with Francisco in the little café in town one day chatting as we began to discuss the system of Usos y Costumbres. He gave me a sorry example:

> If you don't want to do the cargo or pay for someone else to do it either, the municipio will shut the water and sewage to your house. Then you don't have much choice. This happened to one family here. They told the family they would throw them out of the town. So, the family sold their house and they live in Tijuana now. They cannot come back.

The illustration above is of course an extreme example but nonetheless demonstrates that are really expected to earn their rights as community members of Teotitlán del Valle. Furthermore, the quote demonstrates that the municipio holds some coercive power that can to be exerted but only in special and speficic cases like the one at hand. Appointed members for a cargo can refuse it, but those who entirely avoid cargos might face exclusion from the community. One of the main reasons to refuse a cargo is the lack of payment. Some members do not regard cargos as worth the bother since they might prevent them from working full-time. The possibility of refusal is also related to the type of cargo. Some cargos, such as waste management (picking up the trash) are regarded as a nuisance.

Community rules may also provide hints on migration induced adjustments. The Teotiteco community has not yet experienced marked pressures to modify its community principles, although a great number of Teotitecos have opted to migrate outside the community. People living outside the community but participating in the community life economically (via remittances) may not hold office in the community government. Moreover, people originating from Teotitlán but living outside the community are not adviced of the assemblies or do they participate in the election. Migrants can be appointed service, usually community cargo positions, but this requires the presence of the citizen at the time of appointment. The relatively small adjustments to community rules suggest that the level of emigration is not regarded high enough to influence the principal functions of the communal government system. However, the mere existence of these clauses demonstrates the awareness of possible pressures caused by migration and that migrants' participation is discussed within the community.

As already established, migrants can be appointed cargo, but usually only when they are visiting Teotitlán, in other words when they are physically present in the community.

People are not usually called to service from the U.S. Therefore, the same rules seem to be applied also to the migrants when present. However, cargos do not necessarily tie migrants to Teotitlán or make them stay, because in most cases they can get a substitute to take care of their cargo post by paying some other member of the community to do the task for them. Two of my informants mentioned that they had been appointed to cargo service while visiting their hometown, although they had no intention of fully returning to stay in Teotitlán at the time of the appointment. Neither of these informants stayed to complete their cargo themselves but made arrangements for others to complete their responsibilities while they continued to migrate to the United States. I shall elaborate on susbtituting cargo and its communal effects in Chapter 6.

Eventhough, specific people are designated to specific responsibilities the entire community, all female and male residents, participates in the well-being of their town through *tequio*. Tequio is an organised form of collective work performed by those who belong (or feel they belong) to the community for the benefit of the community. Tequio is organized by the municipal government and performed by adult men and women without receiving any payment (Cohen 2004a). For men tequio often constitutes physical work in projects aimed to improve community infrastructure, or for example the condition of municipal and communal buildings. Whereas, for women the work often consists of food preparation and serving for public events, cleaning, providing ritual drinks or other task viewed traditionally as more female.

3.3 Tradition and Ritual Institutions

Tradition is closely connected to the social structure of the community. Fiestas and customary tradition are inseparable from the social whole of the community. To an aspiring anthropologist the town seemed to be buzzing with tradition. Almost every day I stumbled upon some kind of a *fiesta* or a ritual ceremony. If I was not there to witness these traditions myself, I most certainly heard stories of them afterwards from my informants. However, these fiestas are more that meets the outsider's eye.

Historically, Teotitlán was dominated by a ritual-political system that linked social reproduction, that is the ritual production of social actors, directly to politics. The system of religious cargo was closely linked to the system of civic cargo. *Mayordomías*

were obligatory sponsorhips of ceremonial activities to honor the saints. In other words, mayordomias were the most important religious cargo positions in the community. Mayordomia system was the basis of the religious hierarchy system (Stephen 2005, 235.) Ritual authority, stemming from men's and women's experience as mayordomos, transferred into other kinds of authority (Stephen 2007, 55). This was the case until the 1960s and is still partially the case through life-cycle rituals, however the direct link between mayordomías and the civil hierarchy has been eradicated (Stephen 2005, 235.) In addition to this relationship between rituals, politics, and the prestige gained from ritual competence and experience, also age has been a dominant factor in structuring the power relations of local politics. What is noteworthy is that during the twentieth century, the basis for local political power changed considerably. This has been a result of structural changes imposed by the national government and changes in local cultural values related to wealth. The government wanted to secularize local political systems and therefore eliminate mayordomias (Stephen 2005, 238.)

In 1917 the Mexican constitution specified that civil office positions had to be elected by village assemblies, or *asambleas*. Some of these processes coincided with local opinions. The majority of Teotitecos wanted to make mayordomias more voluntary. They did not want them eradicated but they wanted to be able to take part freely and not be forced into taking on a mayordomia.While they wanted to escape the forced sponsorships, they did not want to give up control of their political institutions to the state. The mayordomia content eventually transferred to life-cycle rituals. This provided a measure of protection for the ritual life of the community, but also somewhat distanced ritual activity from political life (Stephen 2007, 56-57.) To my knowledge, no mayordomia has been celebrated since 1999.

Primary sources to prestige, leadership and access to labour and resources, both within households and in the community at large, are the tradional ritual institutions of *respet*[8] (ritual based authority), *compadrazgo* (ritual kinship) and *guelaguetza* (reciprocal exchange of goods and labor). Anthropologist Lynn Stephen argues that in Teotitlán, where economic class differences persist, *respet* does not substitute for class differences but signal criteria for social ranking (Stephen 2005, 47). This criteria are rooted in

[8] *Respet* is a Zapotec word for respect.

relations of kinship and ritual participation. The amount of respet accorded to a person is based on age, number of godchildren sponsored, number and type of civic cargos the male head of household has held and completed, and the number of fiestas sponsored (ibid. 48). Respet also determines person's abilities to hold authority and to have an influential opinion. Respet is positively associated with fulfilling social and ritual obligations and disruptive behaviour can limit the amount of respet accorded to a household. Disruptive behaviour is performed by individuals but because respet is tied to the household this behaviour can lead to the entire household losing its respect position (ibid. 49.)

Compadrazgo, or ritual kinship, binds Teotiteco merhant and weaving families together in lifelong relations of ritual commitments (Stephen 2005, 49). These ties are initiated when an individual woman or a married couple acts as a godmother or godparents to an unrelated child in respect to a specific life cycle event (usually in relation to the Catholic church; baptism, confirmation, marriage). In the case of Teotitlán, the system of compadrazgo should be regarded as important, since it is treated equal to kinship. Furhermore, the significance of compadrazgo networks is deemed high in Teotitlán Compadrazgo increases the number of persons regarded as kin. Since kinship relations are built around a series of reciprocal obligations and responsibilities, the more kin a person has, the greater the access that person has to labor and other resources. Through these ritual kinship ties Teotitecos are able to extend the range of kin they can account for aid in specific (economic, social, ritual and political) projects both in Teotitlán and other places (where Teotiteco migrants reside) (Stephen 2005, 49-50.)

Guelaguetza is another extension of kinship ties. It offers an additional institutional setting for reciprocal exchanges of both goods and labor. In Teotitlán, long-term interest free loans of goods, cash and labor are made from one household to another. These transactions are documented in notebooks mainly by women. As a rule, guelaguetza money and aid is used exclusively for ritual consumption. Labour guelaguetza can be used also for production activities (agricultural work and so on). The particular purpose of guelaguetza is to allow households (usually women) to prepare for ritual responsibilities and fiestas in advance. Lynn Stephen (2005, 51) argues that in Teotitlán guelaguetza does result in "the reproduction of some social relations that are not exclusively capitalist in nature, such as kin relations and those of compadrazgo, but

these social relations clearly coexist with the accumulation of capital, and in fact often help to facilitate it".

Many Teotiteco migrants have still continued to participate in the guelaguetza system. Sometimes participation it is even regarded as an obligation, if not to migrants themselves, at least to their families. The guelaguetza systems gains importance in relation to migration especially when migrants return to their home town to take part in important life-cycle rituals, particularly when they are in the focus of the rituals themselves, to be wed for example. Often these rituals are organized just as magnificent for the migrant as they would be arranged for those who never left the town. This often demands the use of traditional aid mechanisms, such as guelaguetza and creates linkages of indebtedness within the community. Thus, these links extend beyond the community's territorial borders. In other words, transnational chains of debt together with communal and traditional obligation are created.

Fiestas and traditional customs are an inseparable feature of the community structure of Teotitlán del Valle. Nonetheless, what is to be kept in mind here is that all Teotitecos do not see eye to eye when it comes to tradition, and particularly the ways of performing tradition. To portray Teotitlán as a unified, traditionally and religiously homogenous community would be a fallacy. By stating this I wish to highlight the essential but simoultaneously contested nature of tradition in Teotitlán del Valle. Some people even described to me that the multitude of fiestas makes it harder to get ahead in Teotitlán. It is not regarded suitable to choose not to invest on tradition in an appropriate way. Investing in business is often secondary to investing in customary ways of living out tradition, in other words fiestas.

Another matter worth noting is the connection of the ritual institutions presented here with the Catholic faith and church. Most of the life-cycle fiestas are inherently connected to Catholic sacraments or events of the ecclesiastical year (baptisms, confirmations, weddings, celebration of the Resurrection during Easter, and pre-Christmas *Posadas*). Teotitlán has been Catholic at least in name since the sixteenth century. Faith practised here blends local indigenous tradition and rituals with non-institutional folk Catholism (Stephen 2005, 255). Since the 1980s however, a small group of Protestants have existed within the community. Their ideology has emphasized

individual responsibility, personal salvation, economic independence, abstinence from alcohol, and sometimes also freedom from communal obligations (ibid. 255.)

In the first half of the 1990s the protestants of the community gained prevalence and began to protest community requirements for participation in the civil cargo system, object to the community celebrations of religious Catholic festivals, refused to pay household contributions for expences of rituals associated with Catholic saint's days, and also refused to do tequio for Catholic rituals and occasions (Stephen 2005, 255-256). Protestant leaders maintained that participation in the civil cargos was not part of their religion, and that the religious ceremonies and celebration were not found in the Bible. Furthermore, they emphasized the benefits of saving the money usually reserved for ritual consumption and channelling it to private capital accumulation (ibid. 256). Thus, the hybrid of Catholism and indigenous tradition had flourished but the hybrid of Protestant belief and indigenous tradition has proven to be a harder combination to maintain. During my fieldwork, I encountered many people who gave accounts on preferring to save money traditionally used for lavish fiestas, but the premises of these opinions varied significantly. Many returnee migrants especially, held that the amount of resources spent on ritual consumption had become exaggerated and out of proportion. However, these statements did not necessarily have anything to do with religious conviction. I shall elaborate on these accounts later on when I discuss the tensions and changes of communal life in Chapter 6.

As I have presented here, social statuses within the community are produced by and performed with both ritual and economical assets. Therefore, I continue with examining the economical factors that are at play in Teotitlán by looking at how economical wealth and power are constructed and coincide in Teotiteco realities.

3.4 Labor and Class

Analyses of class seem to have lost their appeal and foothold in contemporary anthropological discussion. Instead, talk of transnationalism and globalization as forces that shatter classes and ideas of class have become ever more frequent. These suggest that class is no longer a useful primary category of analysis. Although this thesis will not take class as a principal reference point, I still conclude that examination of class remains imporant in understanding processes of migration in the Teotiteco case. Class

cannot be treated solely as a relationship to the means of production, or a position within a societal distribution of resources. Class is a cultural process, where patterns of consumption, ritual and social performance, as well as ethnically charged and gendered identities are at play. Hence, multiple forms of class politics emerge with this diversity. Here, in this thesis, economic class is used to describe Teotitecos in relation to one another and to the relations of production. I argue, following Stephen (2005), that class relations remain important in understanding and laying a foreground of examining power relations within the Teotiteco community.

In Teotitlán, Zapotec weaving production forms the basis for contemporary class relations, and class divisions rest not solely on forms of property ownership but also on relations of domination and control in the labor process which in turn is understood encompassing not only Teotitlán but other sites involved in the production process Class relations are manifested more directly in domination and control of the production process (Stephen 2005, 42.) Differences between people become apparent in regards of their belonging to either the category of merchant or weaver: those who sell other people's work and those who produce their own work. The latter often also produce weavings for others to sell. Based on my observations and data, I concur with Stephen (2005, 45) in that these categories (producer and merchant) emerge as significant in the articulation of inequality and difference in the community. Teotitecos who participate in weaving are either merchant or weavers in the eyes of their peers. Ritual respect is still open to anyone who can achieve it, but the economic realities of the labor and financial costs of fiesta sponsorhip might make it easier for merchant women and families to achieve such status than for weaver women and families (ibid. 251).

Relations of production between merchants and weavers are simultaneously class relations and ties of kin and compadrazgo. The labor obligations entailed by family and household membership have allowed some households to benefit from unpaid household labor as well as to take advantage of the reciprocal obligations implied by kinship and compadrazgo with those outside of their immediate household. The gendered dynamics of migration played a significant part in this process as well. From the 1940s to the 60s the women sustained a significant part of the population while men were working in the United States under the Bracero Program. At the time, most men did not send money to home but in some cases returned with savings. (Stephen 2005,

176-177.) Therefore, migration and unpaid (female and child) labor were critical in allowing some weawers to move ahead, to become employers for others and hire non-household workers.

Kinship is an important mediator of class and vice versa. Kin-based notions of status are a part of a specific system of differentiation that interacts with class and is in turn affected by the different conditions of capitalist development, such as mercantile, commercial and global capitalism (Stephen 2005, 34-35). The increasing integration of Teotiteco textiles into the global market has taken local class relations and embedded them in a global system of intertwined consumption and production relations. This requires a refraiming of class relations as transnational and cross-border, coupling the role of U.S. based businesses to Teotiteco merchants who operate internally in Mexico but also in the border region and other parts in the United States as well (Stephen 2005, 45).

With the commercialization of the weaving industry, other criteria for the important condition for gaining prestige, *respet*, and political authority, associated with wealth and class position, has emerged (Stephen, 248). Those marginalized in the political system are still able to use respet as way to assert opinions within the communal discussion. This is to say that a new route to respect has opened through wealth. The route created new dynamics. It resulted in situation where community authority is no longer equally available to all simply on the bases age, community service and ritual sponsorship (Stephen 2005, 249).

In the course of the twentieth century, the economic basis of Teotitlán del Valle changed from mercantile and commercial capital to full incorporation to the global economy. The town's economy is nowadays heavily reliant on handicrafts that are produced more or less systematically for the local tourist market and for export to the globalized market. In the 1990s, the importation of subsidized U.S corn made it extremely hard for small-scale farmers (like most indigenous Oaxacans) to make a living. However, Teotitlán had a backup source of income in its textile production. Nonetheless, the market for weavings and other artesan products had stopped growing in the late 1980s and this made small businesses built on exportin un-sustainable as the competition increased locally to the point where producers could hardly make any profit

from their work (Stephen 2007.) The establishing of weaving co-operatives was one of the responses for the worsened economic conditions. Another response was of course migration. Additionally, there is a connection between migration and the rise of co-operatives since women with migration experience organized many of the first weaving co-operatives.

Class is not something that can easily transcend movement, in this case migration. Migrations can transform class positions in various and fundamental ways. Migration is often thought of as the quest for a better life which, more often than not, implies wanting to climb up the social and economical ladder. This, in turn, is significant since socio-economical status has a great connotation to class. On the other hand, many migrants wind up occupying the professions that have become un-wanted among more well-off residents of the host society. While a process of deprofessionalization, deskilling and class deterioration for many immigrants, migration and the tranborder social space provide a much more complicated context for understanding what class means, especially when considered subjectively by those living the experience.

Different households in Teotitlán can roughly be divided into weaving households, merchant households and households that earn their main income from other sources than weaving. Most households that have achieved merchant status used a combination of unpaid household labor and accumulation of initial capital through migration to the United States (Stephen 2005, 177). Family labor is a critical contribution to the accumulation of capital and material assets in most households that have expenrienced this movement up the socio-economic ladder. The labor obligations entailed by family and household membership have allowed some to benefit from unpaid household work, and also to take advantage of reciprocal obligations implied by kinship and compadrazgo (Stephen 2005, 177). The household is the unit of almost all decision making in Teotitlán. Decisions on ritual participation, generating income, and migration are made within the household and between household members.

Households are bound together by relations of production as well as relations of kin and ritual kinship. Teotitlán makes a good example of how pure market logic based on supply and demand cannot explain the functioning of the town's economy. This is mainly due to the fact that the handicraft market is heavily controlled by a couple of

powerful merchant families who have gained high rank both economically and socially, These families tend to have much more bargaining power when it comes to producing and selling artesan products than the average Teotiteco family trying to make living of off the artesan industry. The existence of these powerful merchant families and the mixing of ritual and economic wealth have resulted in decreasing possibilities of making a living for many poorer families. Furthermore, these not so well-off households cannot use economic resources to gain prestige and political authority and become further disadvantaged. They cannot benefit from a situation where economical wealth has been increasingly easier to transform into political and social influence, even power. These intricate combinations of disadvantages are likely to have an effect on households' migration decisions.

The household does not create opportunities for migration. Rather, opportunities grow from the abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of individuals and from the fixed and flexible resources that characterize the household (Conway and Cohen 1998.) Fixed resources include those items that are directly defined and linked to the household and tend not to change through time. Flexible resources are those things, including wealth, that define the household but shift over time and space. Land is a typical fixed resource for most migrants. It is a source of wealth (particularly in the past for farmers), a resource that is critical because it can be used productively. Other capital investments, including the physical home, businesses, animals, and large domestic goods are often fixed, although they tend to have specific starting points on the calendar. Though they may change through time, households are fixed resources for most migrants. They are physically real and set in time and space (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011, 30-31.)

Households provide, have and are also social resources, serving as central nodes for their members and individuals (movers and nonmovers) who develop familial, kin- , and friend- based systems of support. In other words, a household is a symbolically fixed resource that serves as an anchor for the migrant and members. Wealth (both economic and social) can be fixed or flexible (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011, 31.) A household's members can build upon wealth as they deploy it to support their decision. Wealth is also flexible, and one outcome of migration is the creation of wealth that can grow over time and be translated from flexible to fixed. In other words, as a migrant is

successful, that success translates from perceived to real social status in a community (ibid. 31.)

Households are the places where meaning is negotiated together with identities that are constructed and maintained. They do not merely reclect cultural values (Netting 1993.) Households are the still the loci of handcraft production in Teotitlán today. Household and family organization is linked to community organization and class structure by both production relationships and ritual relations. In addition to being the cornerstone of Teotiteco economy, weaving is a much more an intricate phenomenon both socially and culturally.

3.5 Craftmaking: Weaving as a Cultural, Social and Economic Project

> *"We make tapetes. We are artesans. That is what we make, that is what we are and what we want to be." (Rigoberta)*

I have decided to discuss the meanings of craftmaking and artesanship a bit more since in light of my data and earlier studies on Teotitlán del Valle weaving emerges as a fundamental process intricately connected to the making of Teotiteco identity and ethnicity. Apart from being the most significant economic engine of the town artesanship and weaving are much more multi-faceted and their importance to Teotitlán far greater both socially and economically than one would think at first glance. Craftmaking is entagled with almost all economical and social processes in the community. In addition to providing the main source of income to many, artesanhip also plays a crucial role for Teotitecos in defining themselves and their community. The above quote captures the sentiment Teotitecos have towards their produce and weaving. Producing tapetes is much more than just a profession or a way to put food on the table. It seems to reach the very core of the Teotiteco identity. Being a weaver seems to at the same time represent being indigenous, more specifically being Zapotec. Furhermore, Teotitecos distiguish themselves from other (indigenous) Oaxacans by identifying as weavers.

I follow Stephen (2005) in suggesting that the construction of Teotiteco ethnicity has two dimensions: an ethnic identity for outside consumption, which emphasizes community solidarity and a common claim to being the originators of treadle loom

weaving in the Oaxaca Valley, and on the other hand an internal version of the ethnic identity which emphasizes common language, participation in local social and cultural institutions and weawing production, but also contains the contradictions of class differentiation, age, and gender in subtle ways. The internal side of Teotiteco identity accomodates also tensions and therefore the dynamics of power come to play here.

Teotitecos' claim to local Zapotec ethnicity and a right to control weaving production and distribution has been critical to the community's fight for autonomy in relation to the larger political economy of Mexico and increasingly of the world. Although we can no longer refer to a literally "local" Teotiteco Zapotec ethnicity since the community has become transnational, it is still important to understand the significance of place-based local identity in the history of Teotitlán. Furthermore, it is significant to examine how dimensions of identity construction work in different contexts. Weaving is closely coupled with ideas of tradition and heritage and the reproduction of the image of the Teotiteco community for outside consumption. In reality, the ways of performing tradition, in this case weaving, are shaped by local, regional and global markets as well as the Teotitecos themselves. The Teotitecos need to present themselves and their artwork as authentic enough to maintain tourist appeal.

Gerardo, one of my informants, described weaving as something that everyone knows in the town. He quickly added that although weaving is a widely accepted identity marker for Teotitecos, they constantly face pressures to alter weaving techniques towards more efficient ones and to find less costly ways of producing the textiles. Due to the deterioration of the market for the handicrafts, the competition among producers has increased. Gerardo was mainly concerned for the loss of quality in products due to the pressures to adapt to the demands of the market and the wholesalers most merchants primarily sell their produce to. As can be detected from Gerardo's account, there is an on-going conflict between wanting to produce textiles in a traditional manner (facilitating the maintenance of an indigenous identity) and the pressures of the globalized textile market demanding more efficient production methods.

Another informant, Gabriela, described how in their destination migrants often feel restricted by their jobs and moreover they feel that they are defined by their jobs in a negative sense. By this Gabriela meant that many jobs that migrants often do (like

argicultural work, work in restaurants or household services) are categorized as the low-paid, low-skilled, high-strain ones, that ”no-one else wants to do”. Thus, migrants are lumped together into an underclass of low-paid working force and become defined by the type of work they do. Contrastingly, according to Gabriela, being a weaver defines a person in a positive sense, since artesanship is and weaving is closely associated with pride over indigenous identity and cultural heritage. Thus, negative and positive connotations are attached to professions and ways of making a living. Moreover, these connotations vary between places. Being defined by one's work is regarded negative in the other surrounding and positive in another.

From the late 1980s onwards, Teotitecos have founded several weaving cooperatives to facilitate devoting to their craft of making tapetes. These were established mostly by and among women in an effort to compete with local merchant families that dominated the sale of weavings to wholesalers and tourists. The cooperatives made it possible for the women to move away from work *mano de obra* (wage labor for the merchant families). By 2005, about 10 percent Teotitlán's population was organized around cooperatives (Stephen 2007, 50). Cooperatives serve as a source of moral support as the members sell each others weavings. They might also purchase material together in bulk and in some cases even offer credit to their members in need of assistance. Nowadays, the cooperatives have been recognized as part of the formal political structure of the community and women from the cooperatives have been encouraged to even attend community assemblies to represent their cooperatives (ibid. 61). Cooperatives are increasingly putting up websites that are bi- or even tri-lingual (Zapotec, Spanish, and English). They are harnessing digital technology in increasing amounts to access the globalized textile market and reaching possible buyers, whether they are tourists travelling to Oaxaca, the U.S textile wholesalers or whoever interested in these kinds of textiles. Furthermore, the web pages are constructed to function as multicultural sites of claiming the authenticity and uniqueness of Teotiteco history and handicrafts. Stephen takes the discussion even further by relating these websites to the larger indigenous population and movement in Mexico (Stephen 2007, 277).

As I have described here, to Teotitecos weaving is for life. I use this expression to describe the meaning and importance of their crafts to them as social beings and members of their communities, and at the same time to highlight the fact that their

income very often depends on the market for artesan crafts. In other words, the crafts and craftmaking forms the ecomonical, cultural and social basis of Teotiteco life. Moreover, weaving is still viewed as comprising a socially sustainable livelihood. This view is influenced by the current economical situation of the state of Oaxaca (and the whole country for that matter). As I was tols told countless times by my informants, there really is not much work in agriculture or industry in Oaxaca at this moment. Artesanship, complimented often with money gained from remittances and migration, is still among the most viable sources of income for Teotitecos. Furthermore, it is socially sustainable. By socially sustainable I mean that artesan livelihoods and occupations in handicraft production are still held in high value within the community, partly for reasons of connection with the community structure, performance of ritual and tradition, and cultural identity already discussed in this study.

In this chapter I have discussed the central characteristics of social, communal and economical life in the town of Teotitlán del Valle. I what follows, I present the characteristics of Teotiteco migration as they derive from historical and social processes.

4 Characterizing Teotiteco Migration

Contemporary Oaxacan migration is motivated by the perception of real and perceived needs by members of a sending household. These needs are often economic: the household head is searching for higher wages, the physical household is in need of repair, or the goods and services that the members of a household desire are beyond the means of the household members (Cohen & Rodriguez 2005, 7.) These economic factors are most definitely important in encouraging migration but are not sufficient in explaining continued migration from communities of emigration, like Teotitlán. I argue that migration is rooted in patterns of migration formed in a historical process of emigration from the Oaxaca Valleys.

International migration from the state of Oaxaca remained low and was of minor importance through the early 1980s. In fact, through the 1980s, internal destinations were somewhat more common among central valley movers. International or transnational (that is circular, repeated movement between sending communities in Oaxaca and receiving communities in the U.S.) migration increased rapidly through the last two decades of the twentieth century and in response to Mexico's continued economic crises. Oaxacans continued to travel to internal destination; however, the nation's poor economic health and Oaxaca's position as one of the nation's poorest states, effectively pushed Oaxacans across the border (Cohen 2001).

The official statistics portray a descending trend of migration in their depictions of Oaxacan migration in the late 1990s and 2000s. The number given for Oaxacan migrants in the 2000 INEGI survey seems suspiciously low. The survey only accounted for 83,172 migrants from the state of Oaxaca. Community level surveys paint a more plausible picture. A survey by Rafael Reyes Morales and Alicia Silvia Gijón Cruz (2002) provides an assesment of Teotiteco migration as well as migration from some other Mixtec and Zapotec communities. The authors conclude that in average the number of persons who had emigrated from Teotitlán was 0.55 per household. They calculated that there were approximately 953 households in Teotitlán del Valle, suggesting that at that time there were 524 Teotitecos living outside of Teotitlán (ibid. 4; 20).

Biggest numbers of Teotitecos outside Teotitlán reside in California, especially in the cities of Santa Ana and Oxnard, some in Moorpark. There are also others who have settled in the border region, in towns like Tijuana, Rosarito and Ensenada. Many of the Teotitecos in these border towns have established folk art stores to display and sell textiles and other craft items from Teotitlán and elsewhere in Mexico. Teotiteco merchants have a long history of regional migration (Stephen 2007, 11). As early as the 1900 census, 18 Teotitecos were listed as *viajeros* (travelers), who travelled to sell their woolen crafts in the valley regions and possibly as far as the neighboring state of Chiapas (Dirección General de Estadística 1906, cited in Stephen 2007, 11). After the Mexican Revolution some Teotitecos resumed to selling their crafts regionally and others migrated to Chiapas to work in the cane fields or coffee plantations. Moreover, some started heading to the United States from the 1940s and 1950s onward (Stephen 2007, 11.) Some Teotiteco migrants received citizenship and were able to bring their families to accompany them in the U.S. Others, who had become undocumented as the bilateral Bracero Program came to an end, continued to work in the United States and most of them established legal residency. Early patterns on Teotiteco migration imply similar patterns to what Jeffrey Cohen (2004) has suggested for early Oaxacan migrants. Cohen states that Oaxacan migration was characterized by short-term seasonal moves to regional or internal destinations within the country (2004, 55).

By the end of the 1970s, Teotitecos were beginning to send a second generation of migrants to the U.S. In the mid-1980s, many people received residency thanks to the 1986 IRCA (The Immigration Reform and Control Act). However, the IRCA also changed the dynamic of migration as it required migrants to stay in the U.S. until their petitions for citizenship were resolved. The IRCA also contributed to tightening border control. Circular labor migration with short-term contract workers declined and migrants were compelled to spent longer periods in the U.S. As as result, many began to make arrangements to bring their families to the northern side of the border. Furhermore, the developments since IRCA are likely to have amounted to the rise in illegal migration, as it became increadingly difficult to obtain visas, permits for working or gaining residence.

4.1 Migrant Livelihoods: Mobile Weavers and Invisible Workers

Teotitlán del Valle did not really experience a steady flow emigration until the 1980s. In 1980, about 26 percent of the population were full-time subsistence and small-scale farmers. By the year 1986, this percentage had dropped to 11 percent as the changes in possibilities to make a living from subsistence farming encouraged people to increasingly take up textile production and migration (Stephen 2007, 126.) The expansion of Teotiteco weaving industry in the early 1980s provided money to fund people's journeys *El Norte*. Many of these people first began by visiting relatives or friends already established mainly in Santa Ana, where the first Teotiteco migrants had settled (Stephen 2007, 96.) The path of Teotiteco migration is closely linked to the development of the craft market on the border, mostly in Tijuana, and the development of tourism in both border towns and in Oaxaca. To this day, Teotiteco migration remains connected to craftmaking and the textile market. Globalized market for artesan crafts has encouraged some Teotitecos to develop livelihoods as international vendors of their crafts, and simoultaneously the condition of the textile market affected by shifts in global economy in part affects migration decisions.

Although Teotitlán is a relatively well-off town by Oaxacan standards, the income gap between Teotitecos and people in the United States is still very wide. The sentiment of many Teotitecos is lucidly experessed in this quote from my informant Rigoberta:

> It is very sad because now in Oaxaca too the big companies are taking over and the originality is dissapearing. Many people migrate and have migrated for a long time now. Sometimes you just can't live with our craft. (Rigoberta)

As presented by the above quote, migration is often a survival strategy for Teotitecos whose subsistence depends on gathering income from various different sources. Solely making a living by producing crafts and selling them locally has become close to impossible. Many of my informants amounted the decrease in tourism to the deterioration of the image of Oaxaca following the 2006 upheaval[9].

> In 2006 there was a big problem (referring to the Teachers' strike and the violent upheaval that followed in the city of Oaxaca). So no business. Then I went to find where to sell my rugs, big

[9] In 2006, a conflict sparked by a teachers strike led to a state of upheaval that lasted for more than seven months and resulted to the loss of at least seventeen lives. The capital city of Oaxaca was occupied by the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO). The conflict emerged in May 2006 with the police responding to a strike involving the local teachers' trade union. The police opened fire on non-violent protests.

> problems here. So what to do? I thought that I have to get my visa and go to the United States (Gerardo)

The events of the 2006 conflict are still discussed and opinions on the teachers unions' cause vary. However, sympathies for the federal government remain low since the violent breaking apart of the protest is regarded as over-sized and un-called for. Most Teotitecos simply conclude that the tourists are still not coming to Oaxaca or Teotitlán in the same quatities as they used to before 2006. This decline in possible buyers, together with the unstability of the global textile market and drop in wholesale prices has definitely encouragred some weavers (mostly independent small business owners) to pursue an international career. They have become what I call "mobile weavers". Some Teotiteco weavers (for example my informant Gerardo) could be called "transnational artists" or "transborder entrepreneurs". They independently produce textiles for the art market of galleries (mostly located in the U.S). Moreover, they usually travel to the U.S to sell their produce. However, it is noteworthy that these travelling weavers benefit greatly from already established contacts to the United States. For example my informant Gegardo described in detail how he now makes use of contacs he established while working in the Californian service sector and factories when he was a young man.

While some have established new businesses taking up transnational business opportunities, most Teotiteco migrants still chase the dream of a better life by travelling to work in agriculture or the service sector of the United States. Since the 1980s, Teotiteco migrants have increasingly worked in the service sector, including restaurants, hotels, convenience stores et cetera. Teotiteco employment patterns are again consistent with Jeffrey Cohen's (2004) data on Oaxacan migrants in the United States. Cohen found that only 16 percent were employed in agriculture, 14 percent in contruction and unskilled work positions, and 8 percent in domectic work, while 48 percent worked in the service sector (2004, 79). Teotiteco migration and other migrations from the Oaxacan Central Valleys have been characterized by relatively stable employment that in some cases led to possibilities for advancement (Stephen 2007, 107). This contrast sharply with the experience of another Oaxacan group of migrants, the Mixtecs, who have remained mostly contractual agricultural workers (Stephen 2007, 108). Teotitecos have through migration (and taking part in the global textile trade) created ways to

combine different sources of income into socially sustainable livelihoods. By this I mean how money earned from working in the U.S can be used to supplement the income made by families back home and funds channelled into small businesses or making crafts important to the Teotiteco identity.

I have now established that much of Teotiteco migration has to do with subsistence. Thus, it is reasonable to discuss the nature and dynamics of Teotiteco labor lives more closely. Gerardo's description of the shifts in migration patterns sets a tone for the examinination of the dynamic migration process:

> I: Do you think many migrants just want to make the money and then come back?
> G: The first time yes, but later when they know more things they change their minds. So many people are living there now and also stay there. Maybe before in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, people went there to bring money home, but not anymore. People go to live a different life. Before they went to the field, now they go to the cities. You went to a place where there is nothing else (than the job) for you, the money was all you had, when you got it you would go back with your money. But not anymore, it has changed. Now, if you go with your father maybe you'll send it (the money) home, but if you are by yourself you spend it. You know: "let's go for drinks and stuff". (Gerardo)

What Gerardo is implying at is the role of migrant communities in the places of destination. His account cast a fairly negative tone on *paisanos*, fellow migrants, in influencing migrant saving, spending, and ultimately remitting. At the same time, Gerardo describes how the dynamics of migration have changed from contractual agricultural labor more towards long-time employment in the service sector in the cities. In the title of this section, I nominate migrants as "invisible workers". I do this to put emphasis on how migrants often become simoultaneous objects of surveillance and invisibility. They are invisible in that they often are undocumented and that they remain invisible in the society of the destination in order to avoid detention an ultimately deportation by the U.S Border Patrol, known among migrants as *la migra*. The migrants have physically crossed the border but are living in the country without permission, and thus need to appear invisible, while at the same time needing to appear not to have crossed the border by creating alternate an alternate identity and appearing to be legal when one is not (Stephen 2007, 144-145).

Illegality is usually not perceived as a huge problem by Teotiteco migrants. It is largely discussed as the dominant state of affairs. Thus, being an illegal migrant is the normal condition. Being something else, in other words having a visa or a green card is the exeption. *”All migration from Mexico and Latin America is illegal”* or *”There is no legal migration from here”* were very common statements among Teotitecos I discussed migration with. Many of Teotitecos and other Oaxacans do not even make an effort to get a visa to enter the United States, since it is extremely difficult to obtain a visa from the embassy. Moreover, many indigenous Oaxacans also lack official identification documents, let alone a passport. The lack of enthusiasm in acquiring official documents is connected to the common sentiment among Teotitecos that they are discriminated against in the document granting process due to theit indigeneity.

Migrants cross the border most commonly with *coyotes*, paid smugglers who are hired to facilitate the migrants’ journey to *El Norte*. The least risky (at least health-wise) method of crossing is *por la linea,* through the border customs in a border town like Tijuana or Ciudad Juárez. There are two ways of crossing *por la linea*. The first one is to hide in a car or a van and to hope not to be found during inspections. The second possibility is to show fake U.S. documents (mainly a birth certificate or a driver’s licence) to cross the border. Crossing *por la linea* is the more expensive option favoured by women, teenagers and children. The more precarious option of border crossing is through *el cerro*, the mountains. Crossing *el cerro* involves at least days, but more often weeks of walking through the desert and mountains of the states of Baja California and Sonora. This is the riskier but more inexpensive option. The price of crossing the border depends on the kind of risk and danger that one opts for. To my knowledge, crossing *por la linea* usually costs around 6,000 U.S. dollars, while crossing *el cerro* can cost between 2,000 and 5,000 U.S. dollars. To be noted is that coytes are usually only paid if the migrant is able to successfully cross the border without being caught by the authorities.

Many of the informants who had started their migration career in the 1990s, 80s, or even in the 70s, described how easy their border crossings had been. Fernando and Gerargo, among others, told me how they had just ”walked over the border” to the U.S. side. However, border crossing has become ever more difficult since. The numbers of migrants from different areas of Mexico and other places in Latin America started

soaring after the NAFTA agreement and Mexican government's reforms both of which significantly worsened the possibilities of rural communities to make a living. This coincided with, and to a degree probably led to, reforms in U.S. immigration politics and eventually to the fencing of several parts of the border. Border patrolling increased and stricter conditions were issued for people wanting to enter the U.S. Thus, nowadays simply walking across the border has become ever more riskier and dangerous but at the same time ever more viable as an option while crossing *por la linea* has become more and more difficult.

For all migrants, the costs of crossing the border are high. In the past, particularly before the IRCA, migrants did not find the economic or social costs of border crossing as burdensome as they do today. Many migrants moved back and forth, rotating between work in the U.S. and time in their hometowns. More recently, most U.S.-bound migrants remain their destinations and contact their hometowns and families by phone (or today via other digital methods of communication such as e-mail and social media accounts). The fear of getting caught on the border (while visiting Mexico and their home communities) has increased. Getting caught most likely means that the migrants can never recoup the costs of their first border crossing (Cohen 2010, 152.) Furthermore, the costs of border crossing are not merely economic. Crossings are often dangerous, even life threatening.

Jeffrey Cohen (2004; 2010) has suggested that central-valley migrants destined for the United States have remained a largely homogenous group over time. In other words, and unlike more traditional sending areas in Mexico where the migrant pool has expanded to include a much more diverse pool of movers, migrants from the central valleys are more alike than different. While I accept Cohen's interpretation of the relative homogeneity of the Oaxacan migrant, I must conclude that Teotiteco migrants supplement and add to Cohen view with their specialization to making their handicrafts and creating continuations of their work by establishing small-scale transnational businesses.

4.2 Adventurous Migrations: In Search of Freedom and Experience

I would like to present a viewpoint contrasted to the observations of labor migration to make a living. However I do not wish to undermine the importance of economical factors but to shed light on the other aspects of migration processes too. This I attempt by describing so-called migration adventures. I feel that the analysis of adventurous migrations might provide insight into how existing migration gives opportunities and steers tendencies to future migrations. Moreover, the discussion of adventurous migrations emphasizes Teotiteco migration patterns connectedness to life-cycle stages.

Labor and securing the subsistence of the family are not to be taken for granted as the only and primary motivations for migration. However, these remain primary motivations for migrants with families, spouses and children to support. The analyses of migration sometimes suffer from an essentialistic view of people (especially poor people from the South) migrating only because they would not have any other choice. I want to complicate this by presenting findigs from my data which is suggesting that migrant motivations vary also among the ”disadvantaged”. Migrating for gaining new expiences or engaging in adventures is not a privilege for the privileged.

Many of the men that had emigrated at a fairly young age emphasized a longing for an adventure as an important motive to migrate. These men often did not see themselves as specifically migrants but as adventurers gaining new experiences. Gerardo, described this fairly casually:

> You know when you are a kid you just wanna have adventures. Maybe to make a bit of money for yourself. I wanted to visit the United States. Just to put one foot in the United States, and then come back to Mexico and thats it. I needed to know what it was like.

The ethics of migration are complex. There are many perspectives on why people migrate, how people migrate, what impact migration has on receiving, transit, and sending countries, and whether countries should encourage, discourage, or limit migration. Economic motives and chasing the dream of a better life, are both well documented as driving migrations. But how should the role of motives that are easily presented as more selfish, be understood to affect migration decisions? Migration is tied to the human spirit, which seeks adventure, pursues dreams, and finds reasons to hope even in the most adverse circumstances. But is seeking change and pursuing dreams a

choice or a necessity for the human spirit? And furthermore, is this really universal and thus really eligible to be called as “a feature of the human spirit”? It is not in the scope of this thesis to try and aswer these questions. Thus, I settle to acknowledge that many young migrants’ journeys begin as adventures but in the course of time may take a very different form and come to have a different meaning for the migrants, their families, households, and communities.

Young male Teotiteco migrants often make their first journeys to gain adventures and freedom from constraint of home communities, but after returning and possibly settling down and setting up a family, they might use the experience and connection of previous migrations to facilitate new journeys. Moreover, many of these first journeys stem rather from an existencial necessity than from an economic one. Freedom from the constraints of family or community obligations is sought after. Eventhough, the motivations of adventorous migration have to do with breaking away from kinship ties, these exiles are still often facilitated by these very ties. Furthermore, these adventures are coupled with oppurtunities. The opportunities are made up of the same things alrealy mentioned in this thesis, the same ones that make opportunities for the migrant leaving to secure a livelihood for him and his family.

What is noteworthy here is that these adventure migrations are usually only possible for young men. Other groups of people such as women or married men might also breakaway from their home communities but are likely to invoke negative feedback from their families and the community. Adventurous young men are in a life-cycle stage where these kinds of journeys remain relatively accepted by the larger community. Young women in contrast are not expected to migrate for the sake of adventure and excitement and if they decide to do so, these decisions are often frowned upon. This brings us to the topic of next section: gender and its role in Teotiteco migration.

4.3 Gendered Journeys

My aim here is to remain sensitive to gender while not taking it as a focal point of my analysis. Gender is to be kept in mind but will not be the focus of this study. However, gender in significant in many ways when studying Teotiteco migration. Moreover, the category of gender is not viewed as the reason to migrate or not to migrate but included in the analysis of (communal) relations that are regarded to facilitate or hinder

migration. Gender is perceived to become significant through these relations and social life made up of these relations.

Married men typically use their families as a reason to migrate. They make the sojourns they do to earn the money necessary to cover the costs of education, health, weddings, and so on. In Teotitlán, men usually are not the only breadwinners of the families or households, since women almost always take part in weaving. Married women, on the other hand, often experience barriers of migration in the form of beliefs regarding women roles in the community and beyond it.

There is a strong history of migrating Teotiteco men. The most important facilitator of (male) migration from the 1940s to the 1960s was the Bracero program. This enabled Teotitecos to establish networks in the United States and more precisely in the Chicago and Los Angeles area. The Mexican and Oaxacan migratory tradition has been characterized by masculinity and male migration although women have increasingly entered the migration circuit in the past few decades. First significant numbers of women started to go to internal urban centers with men back in the 1970s, and then in the 1980s they began to reach the United States (Stephen 2005, 151). Most international migrants have traditionally been male and females have more frequently migrated internally within Mexico, with the most popular destinations being Mexico City and the border towns like Tijuana.

According to Lynn Stephen (2007) many migrant women from Teotitlán have found jobs in the service sector. My informants' accounts echo Stephen's findings although some have also worked in the fields as agricultural workers. However, many younger female migrants were employed by the service sector as restaurant servants, cooks, child care workers and so on. One of my informants had worked the fields all her labor life and recently returned to Teotitlán after retirement. Another informant had worked in factories and also provided for herself and her family as a musician. Combining different jobs and sources of income remains common among migrants, as it also does back home in Teotitlán. Informant accounts reveal the diversities of Teotiteco womens' labor lives.

In the light of the extensive body of research on Mexican migration, it has become clear that men and women follow different paths as migrants; they often travel to different destinations for different reasons, and once settled they access different jobs. Gender influences the decisions and considerations made before migration takes place. Men and women encounter different barriers to decision making at home as well as abroad. The situations in emigration communities, more precisely gender roles and other gendered structures, influence later decisions and opportunities to migrate. One factor, especially worth mentioning, is education. Women are often encouraged or even forced to leave school at an early age in order to provide work force for the family and the household. While women may also be encouraged to gain a higher education, they are often knowingly and un-knowingly directed to take up professions regarded as more feminine or suitable for women. This is also likely to affect possibilities to migrate and find work in destination communities.

Young women typically find their destination choices circumscribed by family, community, and traditional concepts of correct gendered behavior. In many settings young men are expected to migrate. They move as a "rite of passage". Migrating indicates that they are adults and can care for themselves. Women do not have the same freedom to travel and often their travels are not deemed as valuable. The kinds of adventurous migrations that I exanimed in the previous chapter are commonplace with young men but unlikely for young women. Female migrants, and especially young women migrants, often try to maintain public images of being *mujeres decentes* (good, decent women). Zavella's (1997) account of latina women is useful in explaining this further. Zavella states:*"Catholic-based patriarchal ideas and practices in Mexico and the United States create ambiguous notions regarding women's bodies and constrain their views of pleasure"* (ibid.). Thus, as Lynn Stephen (2007, 53) has argued, young women migrants might be out of the view from their parents but continue to be constrained by these Catholic-based notions of good and proper womanhood and the importance of good reputation.

In southern Mexico, the assumption is that women should stay home (ie. Cohen 2001; 2004). This is connected to a common belief that it is only in their homes that women are safe and not threatened. Particularly older Teotiteco women often describe how they used to never leave their houses to do anything but go to the town's tiny food market.

As young wives in charge of taking care of their families, they would never even go to the city of Oaxaca and migrating somewhere further was almost unthinkable. The situations in Teotitlán and the world around it have changed but womens' mobility still seems to be controlled by conceptions of decent womenhood and the female role of a household caretaker. Yet, more and more young women from Teotitlán and towns alike, are migrating, even internationally. Young women who travel across the border face many challenges, including becoming a crime statistic, getting involved in the sex trade, and being abused. The fear is however, not so much that women will be victimized once across the border, but that the families sending these women will lose control of them and their earnings. Often young women are encouraged to move internationally since staying in touch and retaining control is easier within the Mexican national borders (Cohen 2004.)

Few women are regarded to have been pioneers of contemporary international migration. Indeed, most women have traditionally migrated, and still migrate, along with men. Usually these men are relatives (husbands, fathers or brothers) that have already set up networks and residence in the destination. Also noteworthy is that, like men, many women had to leave their children behind and only later attempt to bring them or have them brought to their U.S. destinations and these procedures of family re-unification rely highly on changing U.S. immigration politics.

Women's obligations to their husbands and children are viewed as hindering their possibilities to migrate. Gender relations withing the families and more broadly within the communnities affect womens' migration desicions. The relational approach employed in this study (and discussed futher in the next Chapter) can function in a way to step aside from the dichotomy between voluntary and forced migration. Reliance on categories (race, class, gender et cetera) in simply explaining social action is rejected. The importance lies in investigating through which relations are these categories formulated and throught which relations the the categories maintained, re-produced and possibly transformed. Also through which relations do certain categories emerge as significant in the migration process. All in all, the relational approach aims at combining the examining both the structure and content of relations and portray these as continuously negotiated.

Patterns can be detected in Teotiteco migration. In this chapter I have outlined the most important characteristics of Teotiteco migration and argued that Teotiteco migrations costitute journeys to secure socially and economically sustainable livelihoods as well as offer possibilities to expand one's experiences. Moreover, Teotiteco migration characteristics are outlined as gendered and life-cycle related. In other words, I have examined what the Teotiteco migration is like. I what follows, I shall turn to discussing the continuities of Teotiteco migration in the light of these established patterns. That is to examine what sustains Teotiteco migration and facilitates its existence as a continous on-going process.

5 Patterns to Relations: Continuities of Teotiteco Migration

Being a part of a network of ties is not enough for migration to become reality but the occurrence of migration relies on the content of the ties. In other words, migrants must have social capital. Social capital is the content of ties: the potential resources in these ties (Poros 2011.) Thus, social capital in a way evokes migration. I wish to put my selected relational approach to use in investigating how certain relations encourage and sustain migration, how certain exchanges take place within ties that maintain the migration process and how exchanges need to take place for migration to occur.

Teotiteco migration can be observed to follow cetain models or patterns. I have examined these in the previous chapter and shall now ask what contributes in constrution of these patterns, and how come these contribute to the fact that migration continues to be a significant phenomenon in the lives of Teotitecos of Oaxaca and other places. I shall argue that purely economic nor personal factors are sufficient in explaining these migration patterns. This is why I present an argument following an idea of some kind of a *culture of migration.* I regard this concept useful in explaining Teotiteco migration. In this chapter, I will also take a look on other aspects that come to play with the emergence and maintenance of these migration patterns, like kinship ties and social networks, remittances, migration imaginaries, community flexibility (and ideas of socially sustainable livelihoods).

5.1 Sustainable Culture of Migration

Every migration story is different and migrants have various reasons to emigrate. These reasons vary significantly, but only personal reasons in themselves are not sufficient to explain migration stories and trajectories of on-going migrations. I acknowledge that migration decisions are profoundly personal, I do not wish to deny this personal significance, but I would say that a focus solely on individual level decision-making tends to ignore the wider effects and outcomes of these decisions and migrations themselves. In this chapter, I will argue for a culture of migration as an important facilitating feature in a continuous process of migration such as emigration from Teotitlán. My intention is to build my argument on the precedeing analysis of Teotiteco migration patterns. Here I ask what constitutes to the continuation of these patterns and the whole migration process? I shall ponder why migration seems to be a specifically

viable alternative to change one's course of life, especially among the young, and why does it seem more viable than some other options, such as higher education.

I follow Cohen and Sirkeci in their argument for culture of migration: "*We argue that the choice to migrate is not driven by economic need alone, nor is a desire to leave a natal home a sufficient catalyst for border crossing. Culture, in other words, the social practice, meaning, and symbolic logic of mobility, must be understood along with economics if we are to understand patterns of migration*" (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011). This idea of a culture of migration is widely accepted in migration literature. Cohen and Sirkeci point out that focus on the micro-level, the migrant as an individual, risks ignoring other levels, the macro and the meso. Also, personal decisions are typically made in response to economic troubles at home, social processes at home and abroad, and judgements concerning treatment abroad. Moreover, in understanding migration and its outcomes it is critical to look at the push and pull of local economic life and how local political ways frame the negotiations of migration. Therefore the decisions are always bigger than the individuals involved (2011, 1-2.) Like strict microanalyses, the macroanalyses also miss the mark by focusing too much on national or global economic and political forces and forgetting social and cultural practices that can increase border crossing or sometimes check migration patterns (ibid. 2). Cohen and Sirkeci's culture of migration theory and the relational approach by Thomas Faist (discussed at length in Chapter 2) both situate on the same level of analysis: the meso.

Cohen and Sirkeci state that this model of culture of migration identifies "*the abilities, limits, and needs of the mover as well as the cultural traditions and social practices that frame those abilities and limitations through time."* It also takes into consideration "*the national, international and transnational processes that render movement sensible, practical, and reasonable while also taking into account the enforcing factor"* (2011, 13). Douglas Massey and his contributors (1993, 452–453) refer to culture of migration in a following way: "*As migration grows in prevalence within a community, it changes values and cultural perceptions in ways that increase the probability of future migration. Migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviors, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values.*"

In this thesis, what is understood by culture is placed into the space of meso-level. The household is established as the place of making migration decisions. The household is sometimes ignored by the migrants and at other times the household overwhelms the mover, but still the household is always present, regardless of the situation. Beyond the household, the decision reflects communal traditions, village practices, and national of even international trends (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011, 3.) Choices are based on real or perceived needs and benefits. Mobility is viewed as a complex response to these needs and wants.

The emphasis on household fits in well with my findings of the nature of Teotiteco social and economical life. The household is the most important unit of the Teotiteco community. Those with more access to resources can more easily pay for costs associated with migration whereas those households with limited resources may not be able to afford sending a migrant elsewhere. Thus, migrants are usually not from the poorest households. Whether in the sending or receiving community, households play a major role in sustaining migrant dreams and realities. Ultimately, the household reaps both the benefits and costs associated with migration. It is not surprising that households will seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs to the individual migrant and the collective.

However, it should be noted that I do not take the culture of migration argument, formulated by Cohen and Sirkeci (2011), as a given. I do not conclude fully with them on their arguments on the relationship between migration and dependency. Although I acknowledge the existence and importance of Teotiteco migration, I still wish to keep in mind the differences among people and challenge the notions of indigenous communities as overly unified, unaltered and static. Moreover, I do not wish to over emphasize the role of culture in a way that would underestimate the economical hardships that drive much of the migrants into finding better opportunities from and in the United States.

5.2 Community Flexibility and Regulation in Facilitating Migration

My data suggests that migration has provided a successful strategy of well-being for Teotitecos. In other words, Teotitecos and the Teotiteco community have been able to strike some kind of a balance between the costs and gains of migration. This balance indicates that there seems to be ”a right amount of migration” from Teotitlán. There is also a mix of circular (periodic short-time) and long term migration. Migration remains fairly easily managed, in terms of communal governance. Evidence supporting this can be found by taking a look at the community rules.

The need for institutional adaptation has remained quite low in Teotitlán. Considerable changes to community rules have remained unneccesary to date. Migration is mentioned and referred to in the rules but at the same time migration is denied as a definitive influence in formulating the rules. Thus, migration is not considered extensive enough to affect the social structure or decision making processes of the community. The community has been able to retain its vitality without great adaptions. Many other communities in Oaxaca and in Mexico have been compelled to come up with adaptive strategies and establish new rules and official obligations for non-resident, in other words migrant, citizens. The only adaptation that has been used in Teotitlán is the requirement of a substitute to fulfill a cargo obligation.

Teotiteco migrants can be appointed cargo service but usually the appointment can only take place when the migrant is already physically present in Teotitlán for another reason, maybe visiting relatives or taking part in an important fiesta. No one is usually called from the destination back to the community for cargo service. Neglecting cargo obligations is punishable by imprisonment. However, accepting cargo positions does not mean that the migrants have to stay present in the community to fulfill these obligations. It is totally acceptable to pay someone else to do the cargo service for you and provide assistance and participate in an indirect way. Migrants are not encouraged to directly take part in decision making processes as they are not adviced about the community assemblies, where all decision-making takes place. Often enough, they still know when the assemblies are held, at least if they engage in regular contact with their families still residing in Teotitlán. However, initiative to participation is usually expected from the migrants’ side. If they want to stay aware of what is going on at home, they need to ask for this infomation.

There is a certain amount of *flexibility* that characterizes social life and relations in regards to migration. Teotitecos retain their rights as community members with relatively little discomfort. Of course, by this I am not referring to the emotional discomfort that might stem from living far away from their families, but to the obligations that the migrants must fulfill to the community in order to stay eligible for community membership. Migrants are rarely ostracized merely because they are migrants. If they continue to behave well and assist their families and the community within the limits of their resources, they are not regarded as second-class citizens compared to those living in Teotitlán. Total alienation sometimes happens but is not common. Thus, migration cannot be regarded as stigmatized by the community.

A prototype of a socially sustainable livelihood for Teotitecos is one that combines strategical labor migration together with the communal project of weaving. The risk and costs attached to migration are more likely to be related to income insecurity and issues with personal security and emotional hardships rather than to factors of social ostracization or losing community membership. By examining community regulations in regards to migration and migrants I argue that, on the one hand this flexibility serves as an answer to pressures brought in by migration, but at the same time increases possibilities to migrate.

5.3 Migration Imaginaries: A Search for a Better Life

A surprisingly positive image of migration seems to persist among Teotitecos. Both among those who have migrated and those who were not engaged in migration themselves. The hardships of migration are acknowledged, although mostly on a personal, psychological or emotional level. My informant, Rigoberta, stated that migration was ”good for work and to earn money”, but also bad because ”it is hard to be separated and the families are divided”. Contrastingly, the adverse affects that migration might yield for the emigration communities were rarely discussed, the exeption being a phemenonon called ”bad migrant habits”. Some people felt that these bad habits were on the rise among migrants returning from El Norte. A strong belief in migrants returning back home was also present in my informants’ accounts.

Anthropologist Patricia Zavella has come up with the concept ”peripheral vision”. With this concept she attempts to construct how people, young women especially, keep track of norms and family expectations in simultaneous locations. Simply put, migrants, whether they reside in Mexico or in the United States, imagine their own situation and family lives in terms of how those compare *el otro lado*, on the other side of the border (Zavella 2002, also in Zavella 2011). In my opinion, this concept in its simplest form, seems applicable to most migrants, not merely to young female migrants, who Zavella uses as her informants. Many of my informants talked of the importance of the ideas they had about the life in the United States:

> It was important that my husband's parents had migrated, that's one of the reasons why we left. And I was young. We wanted to have a better life and we thought it (migrating) was a way to achieve that. And then we got used to it, the migrating life but I was different from what I had thought. I had to work even more and harder than I would at home. (Gloria)

My informants like Gloria, described their migratory lives as hard and physically, psychologically, and emotionally demanding. Their journeys were no walks in the park. At the same time, they always remembered to add: “*But it is a hard life back home too*”.

Arjun Appadurai (1996, 33) has concluded the following on imaginaries: *”I would like to call ‘imagined worlds’ ... the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imagination of persons and groups spread around the globe. An important fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities”).* Furthermore, Gaonkar defines imaginaries as ”*first-person subjectivities that build upon implicit understandings that underlie and make possible common practices*” (2002, 4). Thus, the imaginary is a social and individual mental process that produces the reality which at the same time produces the imaginary (Salazar 2010).

For its imaginative features international migration is not only socially and economically appealing, but also fascinating because it points to a utopia, to a product of fantasy. The images and ideas of the West and especially of the U.S derive from and are perpetuated by information from various sources, some of which people are aware of (for example mass media and transnational networks) and other sources of which

they remain unconscious of. The latter include popular images, stereotypes and prejudices, or collective impressions that are socio-culturally transmitted (Salazar 2010.) Both economically motivated migration and adventurous migration are affected and facilitated by these imaginaries.

I follow Noel B. Salazar (2010) in suggesting that imaginaries, whether true or false or somewhere in between, have real enough effects. Importantly, imaginaries are so widespread and popular because they give people at least some feeling of control in a world where they increasingly feel controlled. The contrast of imaginaries and migration realities presented itself, sometimes quite starkly, in my informants' accounts. Many migrants were dissapointed by the conditions of their destination. Gloria, especially, talked on the subject at lenght:

> The goverments promise so many things and people think that they are gonna give you these things, but when they arrive they find the reality very different. The migrants are attacked against. Sometimes it was difficult for me too, but I understood it. I was without papers, of course it was difficult. They don't understand the difficulties that not having papers will yield. (Gloria)

Teotitecos, Oaxacans or even Mexicans are hardly alone in having unrealistic images of how life is going to turn out for them in their destinations. The phenomenon has been documented among several groups, for example by Noel Salazar (ie.2010) in the case of Tanzanian migrants. Imaginaries of a better life are something inherently connected to migration and more importantly motiver for migrating. However, I do not claim that the migration imaginaries presented here would as such work when applied to the wider phenomeons of Oaxacan or Mexican migration. I merely constitute an analysis of Teotiteco imarinaries of migration, and these imaginaries I find useful in undertanding the sustained nature of Teotiteco migration and migration patterns. I understand these imaginaries might constitute a whole different kind of repertoire somewhere else.

5.4 Kinship Lifelines

How do lives get made in transborder relations and processes? One answer to this question at hand is provided by the investigation and use of kinship relations. Kinship becomes enmeshed in allmost all processes that have to do with migration. Kinship relations affect decisions to migrate, they facilitate journeys and provide aid for newcomers in host societies, and thus might reduce the costs of migration. Kiship

relations might even dictate who is able to migrate and when. They also serve as contact corridors that bind migrants to their homes. The importance of kinship relations to Teotitecos and other Oaxacan migrants is undisputed and well documented (e.g. Cohen 2001, 2010; Cornelius et al. 2009). Even when migrants wish to break free of relations and leave their family behind, kinship relations have a place in the equation. Kinship relations often also get brought into social networks, which then extend the reach of kin relations.

Kinship is often most clearly manifested in returns. Visiting family members is the most important motive of return. Though this means there has to be someone to visit. Family is often visited at times of important life events or a case of severe illness. As Fernando explains, his family returned to Teotitlán after many years to help Fernando's brother, whose deteriorating helth finally required the family to return to take care of him. The family had asked the brother to come to stay in the United States with them, but the brother opted for a life away from his family. This made it easier for him to continue with his habit of drinking heavily. Fernando describes the events before and after the passing of his brother:

> My uncle called us that he is very bad, you need to come, and we went. We took him to the doctor, even to a hospital in Mexico City. But they could not do anything. It was too far gone. The cancer. He died a few weeks later. After that we left the town for like 12 years. We dissapeared. We were just working over there (in Chicago) and all of the family was there. We did not have anybody in the town anymore. We did not have anything over there. We did not have a business. Nothing. (Fernando)

Fernando's account of severing ties to Teotitlán immediately raises the question of what revived the connection to the home town (which was apparent because he was there for me to interview). The important thing that kept the family connected to the town was that they still owned land and had a house in Teotitlán de Valle. Moreover, their house was getting old and needed repairs. Part of the family started returning regularly to fix the house that was still regarded as the family home.

On the basis of my data, I tend to agree with Kearney and Besserer in that "*the spectacular growth of the transnational Oaxacan popular organizations has been made possible because of the sociocultural and political resources inherent in these bounded*

home communities" (2004, 450). Kin relations and other social relations are extremely important for the structure of these communities, and the proper maintenance of these relations therefore crucial for the well-being of the communities.

5.5 Teotitecos Outside Teotitlán: Association and Organization

The biggest concentrations of Teotitecos in the United States can be found in Califonia, particularly in the towns of Santa Ana and Oxnard. Some returnee migrants even call Santa Ana "the little Teotitlán". There are many Teotiteco families residing in Santa Ana and other small towns like Ventura, Moorpark , Oxnard , Santa Maria, Nipomo and also in the city of Los Angeles. I was given estimates that approximately 1,500 Teotitecos are residing in these areas. 300 of these were said to be families and the rest single, or at least residing there without their families.

I was once told that the Teotitecos of Oxnard had argeed to send 200 dollars a year back to the community. Nonetheless, it remained unclear whether any official arrangements for channelling this money were made or would "un-official" migrant remittances to families count as this kind of contribution. Furthermore, I was told that some debate had stirred among Teotitecos of Oxnard regarding the relationship of this asssistance in comparison to the arrangement some had made to participate in cargo service through paying someone back home to fulfill their obligations, in other words substitution of cargos. Some had argued against a uniform and standardized model of assistance since they already paid sums like 150 pesos (9-10 U.S dollars, just under 8 euros) a day for the period of two years, to their cargo subtitutes who took care of their their cargo positions in their absence.

Robson and Wiest (2014), suggest that the establishment of hometown associations (HTAs) facilitates the transfer of financial and cultural resources between migrant and home communities (2014, 108). These associations are formed by immigrants from a particular community in order to promote, organize, and obtain support for the benefit of their communities in Mexico. Immigrant associations like HTAs are a more formal manifestation of what are widely described as social networks. Despite HTA's widespread presence in key regions, such as California, there are important differences among the various Mexican immigrant associations. The authorities in many villages with large emigration losses are of the opinion that there should be stronger pressure on

migrants in the U.S. to recognize their commitment to the home village. No official recommendations have been given by the Teotiteco government, but a degree of monetary participation or taking part in the communal system of Usos y Costumbres is expected.

In the first years of the 2010s Teotitecos of Santa Ana, California, formed a committee, *un Comité de Enlace* (Ruiz Balzola 2014, 68). This organization grew out of a project to raise money to improve the library back in Teotitlán and to create a cultural center to the town. Nevertheless, the relations between village government and the migrant committee have not been easy. Interests have clashed, like when members of the committee travelled to Teotitlán to present their project for the library and cultural center. The municipal government wanted to appoint cargo service for the members of the committee, which the committee members did not want to take up since they felt they had already fulfilled their obligation to participate by gathering the money and presenting plans for the cultural projects (Ruiz Balzola 2014, 69.) This example brings forth a clash of interests. Migrants understanding of communal participation might then differ greatly from the understanding of the community government. Thus, the mode of "proper participation" is debated as are also community rules which, in the eyes of the communal government, form the basis of participation.

Opinions on migrant organizing in the U.S destinations differed quite significantly among my informants. Most agreed that migrant unity and organization facilitated everyday life, but still there was no agreement on the role of migrant associations in providing links and dialogue between the migrants and their home communities. The role of migrant associations as sites for practising traditional customs and protecting tradition was even more controversial among my informants. Moreover, migrant organizations' ability to function as facilitators of integration was questioned and the general claim for integration into the host society was also heavily discussed. All in all, it can be said that the organization of migrants in their destinations provides facilitating features, especially practical help together with support and understanding, to many migrants but the role these organizations in transferring and implementing ideas and methods back home, is not as straight-forward as it may seem. In the Teotiteco case, ties seem to be very efficiently maintained through kinship relations and less importance seems to be placed on official organization of migrants and building

institutionalized methods of participating in the community life back home. This is at least *for the time being*, since as of now the level of emigration from Teotitlán is yet to place significant obstacles to efficient governing of the community without the presence and input of those who migrate.

5.6 Remittances

I argue that remittances are factors in how migration becomes sustained and maintained. Remittances do not flow in a vacuum but are deeply connected to already existing relations. Often remittances follow kinship ties. Kin ties are close ones, but remittances can make them even closer. Money travels from the diaspora to communities of origin according to specific channels of kin relations and via these channels the people residing in emigration communities can also sent food or other commodities to the diaspora (Besnier 2004, 10.) Therefore remittances are not a question of *uni*directional flows of *money*. Rather they might be described in terms of circular movement. Neither is the movement of people unidirectional from emigration communities to diaspora destinations. Migrants simultaneously maintain many kinds of relations with many different people in many different places (Besnier 2004, 10.)

In his study of rural Oaxaca, Cohen (2004) has found that remittances were first used to cover the costs of living and to build or improve a home. Further, he found that saving remittances for investment in a business received "only mild support" (ibid. 108), although there is some variation among local communities in the extent to which small business enterprises were started with remittance funds. Cohen concludes: "the outcomes of migration in the central valleys (of Oaxaca) appear to share more with a dependency model than with the more positive development model" (ibid. 122). He holds out the possibility that this might change, but in general his data support the conclusion, that it has indeed been hard for sending country governments to manage and direct remittances toward development projects. Moreover, many scholars working in Mexico argue that remitting to meet daily expenses and the purchase of luxury goods creates a migrant "syndrome" among sending households (Reichert 1981). In effect, rural households become addicted to migration. Migration becomes the way in which a household's members satisfy cravings for goods and services. Migrants make journeys to earn money, satisfy needs and improve their households, at the same time, the actions of migrants lead to little if any productive investment and thus an ever repeating cycle is

created—sojourn begets sojourn and desires continue to mount (Cohen & Rodriguez 2005, 7).

While, strong ties will continue to pull Oaxacans home to rural sending villages in the central valleys, the prospects for development that would allow Oaxacans to live their lives locally and with dignity, and most importantly without the pressure to migrate, will be in the distant future. (Cohen 2004). The culture of migration model presented earlier partly concurs with these accounts of remittances leading to dependency. In my view the depency model tends to get over-emphasized. Furthermore, the dependency model has mostly negative connotations among theorists of migration.

Additionally, remittances have been suggested to increase local inequality and not to support local or national development (e.g. Stark et al. 1986, Robinson 1998.) On the other hand, many others have concluded remittances to yield several positive effects, such as increasing the vitality of the receiving communities and creating different kinds of opportunities for working, income and entrepreneurship (e.g. Durand et al 1996; Cohen 2001; Chirwa 1997; Massey and Parrado 1998.) Some have branded remittances as unproductive since they are not invested into "productive activities", at least in the eyes of these scholars.

Based on my data and especially on my informants' accounts, I am willing to take a more positive outlook on remittances. First, we must notice that the investment logic, simply adapted from the field of economics as it is, is not applicable in examining and explaining the productivity of remittances in the these distinct contexts such as the context of Teotitlán. The logic must be different here since the households that receive remittances also make up the community, and as depicted earlier, account for most of the work force for community projects through *tequio*. Furthermore, if remittances can secure subsistence for households there might be more room for the non-migrant members of these households to take part in community projects (to improve infrastructure etc.). Remittances may provide a way to participate in the community while away. They may also function as compensation of income, while another member of the household is having cargo service.

Often, people in the receiving communities are not seen as investing but rather spending the remittances they receive. This is because the Western economical science idea of investing and the logic of investing is totally different than the idea of investing in these indigenous communities. The formal categorizations of remittance use tell little of the real ”productivity” of the remittances. They are investing in their cultural heritage. They are keeping the heritage alive and at the same time, by investing to weaving, breathing life into their indigenous identities. Teotitecos are not technically illiterate or oblivious of the global connections that links their town into the international market fabric. Rather, they strategically maneuvre in these different realities. Remittances provide better possibilities to these maneuvres. Furthermore, remittances become part of local the system of reciprocity, they start to circulate in the community's system of exchange. But the remittances that circulate are not only monetary. They might be ideas or skills that directly affect their abilities to make their incomes. Like Gerardo, a weaver and a travelling businessman, put it: "*I didn't bring a lot of money or built a nice house. Maybe it's helping me little by little because I know English. I sell more cause I can talk"*.

All Teotitecos who I engaged with, thought that the remittances have greatly benefitted the economy of Teotitlán. They often described that they got two things Teotitlán. They got remittances and then they got *tapetes* (the textile crafts), and thanks to remittances they could continue making their tapetes. Noteworthingly, the logic differs from the logic of formal economic theories of remittance benefits. Here the logic comes back to the way of life that is a life deeply connected to making crafts beyond economic trade. Thus uses for substistence and uses for ”culture ”cannot be separated here. Buying yarn to weave and to generate income is also buying yarn to continue and engage in cultural heritage, to continue reproducing the Teotiteco identity, to continue to be a part of the (weaving) community of Teotitlán.

More generally, of importance in broadening our understanding of the complex dimensions (beyond the economic) of remittances and remittance behavior is sociologist Peggy Levitt's concept of *social remittances* (1998). She defines social remittances as the ideas, practices, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities. Migrants transfer these social remittances in person or via other forms of communication and they impact gender roles, family relations, class and racial

identities as well as forms of religious, economic, and political participation. They have a significant impact on the lives of those left behind and are the local counterpart to the monetary flows that occur in the national and global arenas (Levitt 1998.) Levitt's analysis suggests that the social and cultural dimensions of change must be analyzed alongside the economic dimensions of change and that both are affected by what flows back with or through migrants who are abroad. Migrants are change agents, but not always in ways that are hoped for by those who want to link migration with development as part of the larger project of managing migration.

How remittance patterns will play out into the future is keyed not to migration outcomes, but instead to the continued involvement of migrants in their sending households and communities, the relative location of a community to an urban center and the local resources that village households can access. Currently, many migrants share a level of commitment to their households and communities that is nearly identical to non-migrants. If households and local communities are to continue to benefit from their migrants, that involvement cannot decline. Oaxacans remain committed to their households and communities and because the majority of migrants have family (and often children) in sending communities, that commitment should continue into the future.

Many scholars (especially in the field of economics) have suggested that managing remittances may help to reduce poverty in sending societies and hence diminish the incentives to migrate. This might be true in the long term, but in the short term remittances often encourage further migration because they enhance the differences between migrants who "have" and non- migrants who "have-not" or who fall behind because the economic stakes change (Brettel 2007).

5.7 Relations and Returns

The Teotiteco migration pattern constitutes one where most migrants return home at some point in time. It is also worth mentioning that some migrants might stay away for decades before returning. Others might not return but maintain regular contact, while some might make many trips always returning but maintaining hardly any contacts while away. The problem lies with the idea of regular connection being the prerequisite of successful return. I wish to complicate the understanding of continuous contact as

key to the possibility of migrant return. I do not attempt to deny the value of this kind of contact in facilitating returns but merely try to emphasize on the fundamental nature of relations, more precisely kin relations, which can maintain their significance even through the lack of regular contact.

There is often the sense that a young mover who leaves without the direct intervention of her or his family has turned away from the sending household and severed any relationship with her or his family. While this may be true, often the young migrant who leaves maintains some connections over time, and even if these connections are not strong, they can become the basis for links that reemerge on a later occasion. These renewed links usually emerge as the settled migrant and her or his success allow for engagement with sending households and origin communities (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011, 24.) People do not just leave behind the places where they were raised and once called home without looking back. At least most of them do not. If something really traumatic happened to the migrant in the emigrating community, they might intentionally severe ties to home. However, these are exeptions in a larger picture. Eventhough migrants sometimes felt that they emigrated because there was nothing left for them in Teotitlán, they still usually thought that this was only *for the time being*. Most left with the intention and desire to return and surprisingly few had any kinds of a specific plans to make completely new lives for themselves El Norte. Based on my data, the most significant factors regulating return were the motives for migration the migrants had in the first place, integration and success in the host society, and the strength of kinship ties to home.

Continuous contact plays a role, but is not a requirement of returning. It is most likely for the migrants to return home at the event of life cycle turning points. Kinship ties bind people together, and to their origins. My informant Gerardo told me, how he always knew that he was coming back to Mexico while he was working in the States as a young man. Although, he never was in regular contact to his family back home, staying in the States and becoming a permanent resident or a citizen was never an option for him. He even could have received the Amnesty in 1986 (IRCA), but turned it down. He had explained to his employer that he did not care for the Amnesty because he did not want to tie himself to one place. Applying and receiving U.S. residence through naturalization meant for him that he somehow would accept that his place

would be in the States (the requirement for residency often had conditions of staying in the U.S for a specific length of time or at least until the petition was resolved) For him the Amnesty served as a restriction while others viewed it as a ticket to freedom. What finally made him return was the deterioration of his father's health. The thing that made him stay in Teotitlán long after his father had passed away was in his own words that he knew weaving. Weaving was something he was confident in doing and something he was confident in being able to make his living off. Thus, being able to return does not require continous contact (weekly, monthly or even yearly), remitting regurlarly or bringing back savings. However, the return process is closely linked to the (social) status that the migrant occupied when they left, and also the status they inhabit at a given moment of return. Did migration affect the content of ties and if it did, was this effect positive or negative? Moreover, did the migrant fulfill his or her obligations towards his or her family, household, asd the larger community. If a father who emigrated to provide for his family fails to make sufficient income, return might be difficult if not impossible.

The circumstances encountered in the host society can also have a significant role in making decisions to return home or to stay in the destination. Many times migrations do not go as planned and not everyone succeeds. No matter how well you integrate you might not be able to continue living in the local that you would want to stay in. As my informant Rafael put it: *"sometimes your future just is not there"*. He goes on: "*I liked it, the life, and adapted very well but I didn't have a place or status there. No social security, no official stance, so I could not make my future there."* Luis Guarnizo (1997) has offered one explanation for the lack of interest in return, linking it to the conceptual distinction between individuals classified as settled (that is, immigrant) and others classified as temporary (that is, migrant). He argues, "*being cataloged as either settled or temporary greatly influences whether a given group receives more or less attention as a subject worth studying—with returnees receiving much less attention than so-called definitive immigrants*."

The increase in interest over transnational and transborder dimensions of migration in the last two decades has also invoked interest in studying and theorizing return migration. There is no singular process of return. The processes of homecoming are characterized by considerable complexity and ambivalence. Returning to weave is,

together with returning to provide official cargo service and building or renovating a house, a major motive of return for Teotitecos. Weaving is also, together with more formal ways of participation, viewed as taking part in the functioning of the community.

Again, the relations of kin play a pivotal role in migrant reutrns. Many of the Teotitecos residing permanently in California or other parts of the United States still opt to have, for example, their formal weddings back in Teotitlán. As discussed in Chapter 3 raising money to arrange the festivities (traditionally done with the help of mutual aid institution, guelaguetza), can prove very difficult or near impossible to people residing more or less permanently outside Teotitlán. However, this difficulty no seems to have put Teotitecos off from wanting to celebrate their important life cycle events back in their home town.

In previous chapters, I have discussed the characteristics of Teotiteco migration, in other words migration patterns, and then the processes that together with these migration patterns contribute to continuities of Teotiteco migration. I have put emphasis on the role of kinship relations in facilitating migration, maintaining migrants' connections to their home community, and offering ways to channel funds from migrants to their immediate families and sometimes also to larger community projects. Next, I will turn my attention to discussing the possible and anticipated outcomes of migration, not only for migrants individually but also for the relations among migrants and people left behind, and the implications of migration to communal life.

6 Migration Outcomes: Transformations?

Here I shall present some findings on what kind of outcomes does migration yield for individuals and households, as well as to communities. My consideration of migration oucomes is a broad one that extends mostly to the effects on social realities of both migrants and the ones left behind. I have not deployed systematic statistical methods to measure migration outcomes in home communities but rather wish to discuss the implications migration has on the social universe of these people. I begin by discussing debates over tradition and communal life. I cover differing insights on the purpose and performance of community traditions, together with the question of participation in the community structure. I then proceed to tracing debates of what posits threats to communal ways life in Teotitlán del Valle today. Moreover, I consider the role of migration and migrants in these processes. Additionally, I examine ways of migrant belonging and discuss migrant agency in the framework of cultural politics and the politics of citizenship.

Due to restrictions of my data, I will concentrate on the effects of migration on the migrants themselves as members of their home communities, and on communal life back home. I do not have first hand data of migrants' lives in their host societies. I can only analyse their recollections and the stories they have told me while I interviewed them back in their home town of Teotitlán del Valle. I certainly include migrants' insights on their lives in their destinations but will not take these as the foci of my analysis of migration outcomes.

In examining how migration reshapes sending communities, many sociologists have focused on what the United States gives migrants, or the things that "flow" from places of emigration to destinations. The flows have most often been understood in terms of money and "democratic" ideas. Most argue that emigration has transformative potential in sending communities if migrants remit their wages for productive investment, or if they "bring home" civil rights and democratic politics they learned in the United States (Levitt 2001; Portes, Escobar and Walton Radford 2007; Fox and Bada 2008). These interpretations imply that migrants' ability to change their hometowns hinges on their economic and cultural incorporation on the receiving end. People are suggested to somehow gain a voice in the migration process, specifically while residing in the host

society. I shall now turn to considering the extent to which this could be found a reasonable explanation in the Teotiteco case.

Furthermore, I consider whether the migrants desire or/and attempt to make Teotitlán "the continuation of the better life" or hold Teotitlán is as the local for "an alternative life"? Some migrants see "the perils of freedom" now extending to life back home. That is not what they want to see, but to strategically use their insight and means gained from the migration process, to prevent what they often call "moral degradation" from happening in their hometown. The ideas of democracy and civil rights might be viewed as continuations of U.S. induced capitalist logic, rather than routes to emancipation. Contrastingly, the migrants want to make people aware of the forces that might threaten their livelihoods, namely their small scale weaving businesses. These forces are said to derive from the morally suspicious capitalist logic and the U.S. is perceived as being the home of multinational enterprises, which in turn, are viewed as the cultivators of this unwanted logic.

6.1 Debates over Tradition and Communal Life

Communities are facing a whole range of collective-action dilemmas and the ways in which they are able to react and respond to those, rely largely on the sociocultural, economic, environmental, and intellectual resources available to them. Some aspects of age-old systems, like Usos y Costumbres, can travel fairly easily with migrants while other traditions are harder to maintain without productive presence in the community.

My informant Fernando gave me an insightful account one morning. He described how him and a couple of other migrants had formed a music band in Chicago and had the idea of helping to raise money for a new road to be built from the highway to the town of Teotitlán. Fernando and his comrades decided to organize a dance back in Teotitlán Ultimately, this event attracted people all over the area arounf Oaxaca city, and succeeded in raising about 50,000 U.S. dollars for the road project. However, it was no plain sailing for Fernando and his companions. The municipal authorities of Teotitlán were at first eager to ban the whole event, since they were suspicious of this assistance that seemed to them be coming from outside of the community. They were weary of the possible conflict of interests these outsiders would have, since at the beginning they only knew that there was a band from the United States coming to play in their town. As

it became clear that the band was made of migrants and backed up by several other community members they finally authorized the dance and agreed to accept the money gathered. This event of regional and communal fundraising is an example of a novel way of participating in communal life, at least in comparison to the former methods of only participating through cargo or tequio. Since the road could not have been built through communal tequio labor, and the funds granted by the government were not sufficient themselves, the migrants' innovative response ultimately satisfied the needs of both parties. The migrants could be seen as participating in communal life and the community as a whole benefitting from their actions.

The construction of the new road also reveals other interesting factors of communal life of Teotitlán. In addition to being the first project that was partly financed with the help of migrants' initiative, it also marks the beginning of a tension in the structure of political authority. Many well-off mechants had a significant role in making the road building project happen and their actions became significant also in the larger setting of community affairs. The merchants negotiated outside of the formal political system, with the officials of Oaxaca state and city, and this subtly began to challenge political authority based on ritual experience, traditional knowledge, and custodianship of communal resources and rights. However it is no be noted that some of these merchants proposed selling the communal resources to gather funds, but others defended the importance of commodity control over collective goods (Stephen 2005, 169.) Compared to the merchants' taking liberties in the case of the road building, the migrants' well-meaning fundraiser ultimately spurred more support and arouse less ctitique from the municipal authorities.

As discussed, the way to express belonging and loyalty to the community has traditionally been fulfilling a cargo position and taking part in the communal labor of tequio (as discussed at lenght in Chapter 3). However, the question of being a proper member of the community is in reality more complicated and has been further complicated by increased international migration from the community. There are disputes over morality and community loyalty, both among migrants and the ones that stay behind. Robson and Wiest (2014, 109), in their investigation into the participation of Oaxacan migrants, concluded that cargo and tequio no longer seem relevant in today's world. According to one of their informants, many migrants continue to comply

with the obligations in good faith but have no intention of going back to their home villages (ibid. 109). Some of my informants' accounts echoed similar sentiments, while others said that they would be eager to help but do not see the traditional ways of communal participation as relevant in a 21st century world. According to Robson (2010) continued commitment to customary governance highly depends on migrant's marital and family status, migration patterns, and new attitudes among second- and thrid-generation migrants. He also states that there seems to be a trend towards declining participation (Robson 2010)

I argue that the trend of participation need not to be a declining one, but the mode of migrant participation is deemed to change. The preference of helping the home community with skills, ideas and insight gained from the migratory experience has become increasingly apparent, especially among younger migrants. Often, these practices are especially targeted to improving local businesses. This is particularly apparent in Teotitlán as the town's economy is mainly based on artesan businesses. Interestingly, improvements in migrants have suggested do not aim at making the production process more efficient, but try to assist Teotiteco weavers to gain a competitive edge in the global market by providing information on patenting their artwork and capitalizing on marketing online. Furthermore, Teotitlán is a prime example of applying business insight to enhance the opportunities of local businesses, as migrant women have been known to establish Teotiteco weaving co-operatives from the late 1980s onwards. Through the discussion of new ways of participation and the disputes over these new models, I finally arrive at the heart of topic of this section: the debates over tradition and communal life.

Noteworthingly, debates over the position and meaning of tradition are commonplace, both among the residents of these so called traditional communities and also within the academia, among researchers who study these communities. For the purposes of this thesis it is most important to note that the opinions on communal life, usually branded as traditional, vary greatly within the community. Also the traditional customs performed differ within the community. Thus, it is worth mentioning that among researchers of Mexican migration and its effects there has been significant debates over the condition and status of communal goverment and traditional ways of life. I wish to take part in this discussion by presenting views from my fieldwork and my informants'

accounts. I shall evaluate some of the common suggestions made by reseachers of Mexican migration in the light of my data.

Firstly, it has been suggested that there has been significant decline in the quality of communal goverment due to emigration. Robson & Wiest (2014) take on the example of top cargo holders' characteristics in claiming that, because of the pool of qualified citizens is shrinking due to emigration, it has become increasingly difficult to find the right people for the most important jobs. Moreover, they suggest that a reduction in the duration of mid- and high level cargos has led to a much faster turnover of officeholders and this affects the quality of work that they can achieve. Robson and Wiest report near desperate accounts on how "*nothing ever gets done and new people constantly come in with new ideas and existing projects get put to one side*" (2014, 109). Robson and Wiest suggest that the monetization of the cargo and the tequio (when migrants are obliged to provide compensation for their non-participation), provides migrants an opportunity to finance the continuity of local customs and way of life (2014, 110).

In analysing these changes in holding cargo positions, we must gain an understanding of which cargos are regarded as the "most important ones". Might it be that even the notions of the importance and ranking of cargos has changed? In my opinion, this understanding of the hierarchy of the cargo positions is of upmost importance. Modern techical means have come to collide and coexist with traditional ways of living and performing everyday life. These changes have most likely affected the nature and ranking of cargo positions. Techical cargos in close connection to tequio projects have gained importance as Teotitlán has become increasigly modernized. By modernized I mean improvements in infrastructure, like building of sewerage and new telecommunications opportunities. Cargos related to these functions have risen in importance, and so have the qualifications and skills needed to manage these positions. In my informants' accounts these questions of competence arose as points of debate over the place of the tradional system of Usos y Costumbres. Rafael, a returnee migrant and a shopkeeper in his thirties, criticized the traditional system in a very unapologetic manner. He thought that time had passed by the traditional system and to him it has not been able to retain its relevance. Rafael explained how he does not think the people of the town necessarily have the required knowledge to perfom their cargo positions, since the tasks have become increasingly professionalized and complicated. He also stated

that there are people, mostly outside the town, that can do things properly and should be paid to do so. I nominate this difference in opinions as *the relevance debate* on tradition. In Teotitlán, the relevance debate mostly concerns the system of tequio and cargo, in contrast to the other debate that mostly touches upon the performance of the traditional customary rituals. This other debate I nominate as *the authenticity debate*.

Still today, traditional communal life remains important to Teotitecos. Opinions over tradition differ, but tradition most definitely remains important in the daily lives of Teotitecos, both inside and outside Teotitlán. For the purposes of this thesis, of most value are accounts on the relationship between migration and traditional communal life. My data suggests that many of the traditions are still held in high value also among Teotiteco migrants. Moreover, Teotiteco traditions are kept alive, maintained and performed also in migrant communities on the northern side of the border. The question here is not so much of the dissapearing of tradition but rather of the debate on what kinds of traditions are worth keeping alive, how traditions should be performed and by whom. This is the root of Teotiteco debate over authenticity of tradition.

When I first started conducting interviews with Teotitecos and Teotiteco migrants, I was interested in migrant opinions on traditional customs. I must admit that I held an assumption that some sort of an erosion of tradition would be found amongst migrants. I assumed a decrease in interest over tradition. My very first interviews proved this assumption utterly over-simplified and inadequate. Against my expectations, I found that my migrant informants were very much still interested traditional custom. They were particularly keen on discussing the ways tradition was perfomed nowadays, compared to the ways it used to be perfomed earlier.

When I asked my informants what they thought of the traditional customs performed in Teotitlán or how they felt about the system of Usos y Uostumbres, I got very mixed answers. What became clear though was that tradition was far from being meaningless or insignificant to my informants regardless of what they thought of it. I soon noticed a tendency in interviews of long term Teotiteco migrants. These informants tended to emphasize their view on the authenticity of tradition. They often noted how they did not like the way traditional customs, fiestas in particular, were currently performed in Teotitlán. These informants often described the current ways to perform traditional

fiestas as ”the bad part” of communal life. I then proceeded to ask why they thought this way on perfoming the ritual festivities and pointed out that tradition seemed to play a significant role in people’s lives. The answers I received were surprisingly consistent in stating, that in their view the tradition had lost something that had lied in the heart of it, some of its true content, and what was left was deemed as only a shell of a formerly meaningful social custom. Several informants stated that the trend seemed to be a rise in the celebration of family or life cycle events, at the expense of ”real” communal fiestas.

My informant Fernando gave me an informative account on the changes of traditional custom. He described how people nowadays are putting more and more money into organizing huge fiestas and community events:

> ”They are exaggerating things, they keep on adding new stuff every year. The committees are getting bigger, but they are really doing nothing. The church committee does not even attend the mass! We do not need all of them. They only want to compete against each other. When they do something, the reality is that only one person does it and the others drink beer. That is how it is! Our customs would be good if they were what they used to be!” (Fernando)

Like Fernando, many others also stated their resentment of big, over-the-top fiestas. On several occasions I was told how when people organized fiestas in the past, all the neighbours would get to together and help but nowadays people only mind themselves. My informants suggested that performing traditional custom had increasingly lost the meaning it used to have, such as working together for the good of the whole community, and was becoming more and more about showing wealth and bragging. I heard countless stories of parties where the family had gone ecxessive with catering the guests with the counsequence that the left-over food was just rotting away in piles. Of course, these stories were more than likely to be a bit colored.

I could easily understand my informants’ worry for the restoration of meaningful tradition, but I still wanted to push the envelope by suggesting that the traditional concept of guelaguetza, mutual aid (covered in Chapter 3), must still be regarded as a good guideline for performing and organizing customary events. However, I was again caught off guard by the answers I got. To my surprise, guelaguetza was also strongly coupled with a lack of ability to prioritize. An example shall illuminate the idea behind these opinions. I was again talking to Fernando, one of my key informants. Earlier, we

had already talked about his views on people spending relatively large amounts of money on alcohol and food while organizing fiestas. I asked him what he thought of guelaguetza? He began to explain:

> Why would you owe people? I mean, why do you want to owe to other people? The story goes: when a guy (a friend of his) got married, his mother wanted to organize a big party for a lot of people. So she accepted guelaguetza, and then the son had to pay back the guelaguetza, cause this is ”the way to do it”.

For Fernando ”the way to do it” was not enough. It was not a sufficient explanation or enough for him to keep on going with the flow. He went on to explain how fiestas take a lot of the income people make. What makes the situation more problematic, is the income inequality that is closely intertwined with the class structure of the town. As Fernando describes:

> There are a lot of rich people in this town, so they can afford it and make glamorous parties, make quinceñeras[10] and everything. But the people that don't have money want to do the same thing too. They feel that they HAVE TO do it. There's a lot of competition in the town, the people want to show off. People are saying that they are catholic but they are not. They are not acting like ones. In a wedding the church is not the important thing. The people stay in the house. They don’t even go to the church. They focus too much on the party. Even the priest! Why is he charging a lot of money from people for baptisms and other sacraments? They could just baptise the child in the Sunday mass, but no. They want their own mass and all the stuff.

My migrant informants definitely did not fit into my preliminary assumption of becoming indifferent to tradition. In their view, they were definitely not the ones who were losing touch with the traditional customs or ritual. Contrastingly, many of them felt that tradition had already changed for the worse and lost some of its meaning in the hands of other Teotitecos. They thought of themselves as the ones who were trying to restore tradition and find its ”true meaning” by taking it back to the ”roots”. Thus, elements of nostalgic sentiment towards the lost traditions can be detected in these views. The perceived degradation of traditional custom is strongly connected to the increasing economical inequality and social class stratification in the town and these in turn are thought to drive people into competition with each other. Thus, the competitive

[10] Quinceñera (Spanish for ”fifteen-year-old”, feminine form) is a celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday. This birthday is celebrated differently from any other as it marks the transition from childhood to young womanhood. Nowadays often celebrated a big parties for significant groups of people invited.

nature of performing tradition is identified as the thing that is going to lead to the decay of traditional communal life.

Migrants are often portayed as change agents and coupled with the introduction of modern, even progressive, ideas to their home communities. These kinds of views often have a tendency to view traditional communities as heterogenous and progressive change something induced by forces coming from outside of the community. They also paint a picture of the community as static or even illiterate to change. My aim here is to argue againt these stagnant views of emigration communities, particularly indigenous emigration communities, by demonstrating the understandings and sensitivities that Teotitecos have towards economical and social change and changing ways of life. Teotiteco migrants, as well as Teotitecos residing in Teotitlán, all ackowledged the role of change in communal life. Furthermore, many shared the idea of tradition changing but not dissapearing.

In my interviews, I often posited the question of the possibility of tradition and modernity co-existing. Once again, my own presumptions were revealed by the answers. Modern technical advances were not automatically seen as threatening traditional ways of life. In fact, Teotitecos have been quite strategical in adopting modern technical means. They nowadays have lot of amenities that make everyday life easier. Still at the same time they have remained hasty of technologies that would tamper with their traditional ways of making tapetes to earn a living. They are increasingly looking at digital technologies (websites and e-mail) as tools for directly accessing the U.S and the global textile market and reaching the tourists that come to Oaxaca. Moreover, the local community museum also has a website which is used as a multicultural space both to attract visitors and to make claims about the uniqueness of Teotitecos while linking them to the larger indigenous movement in Mexico and the United States. However, at the same time rejecting and preventing the entry of modern textile industry's technologies gives them a claim of authenticity, which in turn offers a competitive advantage in today's eco-appreciating tourist market. Interestingly, if these nostalgia-embracing migrants are not the greatest threat to traditional communal life of Teotitlán, then what is? This question is considered in the following section.

6.2 Threats: Bad Migrant Habits and Goverment Intervention

Being conscious of tradition and communal life as ever changing, does not mean all change to be greeted with open arms. Change might be understood as inevitable, but the people are far from being indifferent to change. My data is a combination of insight from migrants, non-migrants and returnees. Their accounts on change and threaths to communal life are surprisigly similar and emphasize similar factors. The government (other than their own munipal or communal government) was stated as the most prominent source of unwanted change. Goverment advocated changes were most often deemed as harmful or restrictive to the communal way of life. Both indirect and direct government interventions were deemed hazardous. Oaxacan indigenous communities have a relatively autonomous position in the state system and are allowed broad self-determining rights. This autonomy is held in high value among Teotitecos and the degree of this autonomy materializing in reality is also frequently discussed. Furthermore, the autonomy is not viewed as a compromise to which the state has agreed to but as an incremental right of the Teotiteco indigenous community which has inhabited the same land long before the emergence of the federal Mexican state.

Teotitecos often expressed a deep distrust of statal and federal government. The attitude towards government intervention is highly sceptical. The goverment is often seen as the bearer of divergent moralities and intentions that do not fit the communitys' aspirations or views on how communal life should be arranged and managed. Fears over government induced change relate more often to economical changes, rather than to direct revisions of traditional or political governance. Economic difficulties were largely seen as caused by federal government's decisions on neo-liberal reforms letting international operators, like American multinational companies, enter the Mexican market, and corrupt policy makers' hoarding funds at the expense of the people. These were often viewed as more likely to harm and erode the traditions and communal ways of life instead of the influence of migrants' new ideas on tradition or (non)-participation in communal life.

Along with goverment intervention, bad morals or immorality were regarded as notable threats to traditional communal life. Introduction of bad moralities and habits is the most dreaded consequence of migration, both among Teotiteco migrants and non-migrants. Migration is advocated as a chance to learn new things, to educate one self

and gain insight for the benefit of the individual migrant and others around him. On the flip side, bad influence and bad habits brought into the home community are feared. Bad habits are posited to contain more than the regular perils of crime, intoxication and loose sexuality. Many U.S. holiday traditions, such as Christmas parties, Thanksgiving and Halloween are also considered as bad habits. Bad migrant habits are also very strongly associated with the life in the city. Urban life is contrasted with the rural life back home. Rural life is deemed good and humble while city life is viewed arrogant, selfish and hedonistic.

The most controversial topic of the so-called migrant souvenirs has to do with language. Even English language can in way be viewed as a bad migrant habit, if the use of English is brought back to the home community. Language debates are rife in communities on both side of the border. The public use of Spanish is perceived as a threat to English, in bilingual communities in the U.S. Among Zapotec migrants these dynamics are more complicated. While Spanish serves as language of solidarity among diverse groups of Latinos in Los Angeles, for indigenous communities its use is also a potent index of Mestizo dominance in Mexico. Teotitecos are originally Zapotec speaking but the erosion of Zapotec has been eminent in the course of the 20th century. Spanish has become the language of everyday use, although Zapotec is still widely spoken and taught. English is good as a tool or an instrument gain economic success in the migration process, but it is not good for English to be omitted as part of your identity. Knowledge of Zapotec language is viewed as one of the most salient markers of indigenous identity, which is in turn coupled with traditional communal life. Therefore, the use of English language is perceived as a threat to custom and communal way of living.

Oaxacans, and particularly indigenous Oaxacans, suffer discrimination within Mexico, and local patterns of bigotry and racism impact on the decision to migrate (Nagengast & Kearney 1990). However, living with other Oaxacans in an immigrant enclave in the US and lacking English proficiency usually means working for another Mexican. The connection between the Oaxacan migrant and settled Mexican employers can be mistaken for a network connection. To put differently, the Oaxacan migrant accesses connections to cross the border that are largely based on kinship and friendship networks. Yet, once the border has been crossed, that same migrant often finds a job

(whether through family or friends) that involves working for another Mexican. This connection, a socioeconomic link, should not be mistaken as a social linkage based on shared cultural beliefs. While the relationship can develop to become a friendship, it begins as an unequal business relationship (Cohen 2010, 157.)

6.3 Migrant Belonging

> *"Here you don't need a paper to be accepted as part of the community"* (Gabriela).

The outcome of Teotiteco migration is a transborder community that exists on both sides and beyond the border. As I have presented above, tradition and communal life remains meaningful for both migrants and non-migrants. What is to be noted here is that also tradition and communal life become transborder processes. In the above section, I considered outcomes of migration from the point of view of the community and traditional communal life. I shall now put my mind to presenting the outcomes migration brings to the migrants themselves. This I will do by discussing migrant views on participation and belonging, along with migrant subjectivity and agency.

The quote in the beginning of this section is by one of my key informants. It captures the sentiment underlining the way migrants describe their sense of belonging to their home community of Teotitlán. My migrant informants' accounts reflect a deep feeling of being branded as outsiders, even aliens in their host communities. Without the officially acknowledged citizenship they will not be accepted as full members of their communities and the wider society in the United States, regardless of how they perform as a productive part of the community in question. Back home they do not need official documentation to legitimize their membership. To Gabriela, among many other migrants, the acceptance of the home community has served as a great emotional relief. "*I was born here, that is why I came back. Nobody asked me why I was here when I came back. Because I am from here, they all know me*", she once told me.

The legal status of the migrant in a place of destination is a major factor in defining their migratory processes, including possible returns back to home communities. Going back and forth is hard without legal documentation. Again, paperwork and official documentation play an important role in shaping processes of belonging. In other words, the law togerher with the rights a migrant has are important in facilitating or

hindering processes of belonging. I follow Alejandra Castañeda (2006) in my understanding of migrant belonging. Belonging has been articulated and discussed by a myriad of researchers and molded by much insight, but for my intentions here I will focus on three aspects of belonging. The three aspects of belonging are 1) the relation to law and the rights of the migrant, 2) indigenous or national identity, 3) membership and sense of place (adapted from Castañeda 2006). This kind of understanding of belonging brings the concept close to the definition of cultural citizenship. Migration in the modern world is greatly influenced by the questions of rights based citizenship. Belonging emerges as pivotal in regards to migration, because when stable connections to the collectivity become threatened the questions of citizenship, membership and belonging pop-up as problems (Yuval-Davis 1997).

The first aspect of belonging, the law and the migrants' rights, has viable and direct impact on the daily lives of migrants. During my stay in Teotitlán I was told many stories of the hardships with both the Mexican authorities and the authorities on the northern side of the border. Almost all of my informants had had their fair amount of difficulties in applying for official documentation. Many mentioned that being an illegal migrant and not having papers basically prevented them from returning home to participate in communal life. More precicely, they probably would have gotten back home without trouble but could not have crossed the border back to the United States. For many, the risk was not worth taking since the opportunity to gain a fair income remained much better north of the border. On the other hand, the lack of U.S. official documentation also signified a great risk of deportation if caught by the immigration authorities. The U.S. illegal alien discourse[11] also meant that many migrants did not give themselves the permission to integrate or to develop a sense of belonging to their destination communities. Without official recident status or citizenship they could neither have the rights related to these statuses, hardly a fertile ground for the development of belonging. Experiences of exlusion are likely to drive returns to sending communities (Andrews 2014, 57.)

The strongest links to home communities are usually provided by kin relations (as I have already argued in Chapter 5). Many of my informants described their sentiments

[11] U.S immigration discourse crafted and manifested in policies (like California's Proposition 187) to restrict the rights of immigrants. Fabrication of immigrants as the national enemy.

towards their home communities as being in debt. The idea of giving back to the community is very much present in migrants' accounts. Interestingly, the migrants that felt most indebted were usually the ones that had emigrated several decades earlier and never fully returned to live in Teotitlán but visited regularly. They had retained a strong relation to the community but had not felt compelled to return to live in the community. Perhaps, having permant residence outside of the home community even increased their sense of being indebted.

Sense of belonging seems to become heightened especially in times of different kinds of hardships of migratory life. These hardships may also provide motivation to return. For many migrants, the community back home is still something to fall back on when life is hard, thus providing a safety net. This is accentuated by the fact that many migrants retain their rights to own land. Having land back home (and possibly even a house) provides a viable alternative, especially in times of economic hardship. Back in Teotitlán, the migrants do not have to pay rent and are able to cut down on other domestic costs too.

Alejandra Castañeda (2006) analyzes experiences of Mexican migrants in her account of the politics of citizenship. She quotes one of her informant, Maria, living on the U.S side, north of the border. Maria says: ”*But Mexico is here. And I am still in Mexico”*. These kinds of informant accounts are very telling of migrants' sense of place. My informants' stories often echoed similar sentiments than what Maria had put forth. My informants described how they felt that they were still in Mexico and most importantly among their own while living in the U.S. At first glance, it seems that the wide geographic dispersion of indigenous workers' migration would be a fatal blow to the communities immersed in this process of integration between the U.S. and Mexico. Nevertheless, indigenous communities have responded creatively to the challenge of maintaining the social and cultural web that makes the community viable across geographic distances. Through the migration process, Teotitecos have been in able to strengthen their ethnic identity, which has made it possible for them to organize and maintain close ties with their communities of origin. As already stated, the outcome of Teotiteco migration has been a creation of a transborder community. The traditional systems and ways of communal life have also become transborder processes. Furthermore, migrant belonging has a transborder nature.

6.4 Migrant Agency: Self-empowerment and Politics of Citizenship

I shall now turn to the everyday life disjunctures that characterize migrants' social realities. What happens to agency and subjectivity in the course of migration? What are the outcomes in regards to how migrants relate to their communities, how they view themselves and the people around them? What is a good migrant? How to be a good migrant? These are some of the questions that arouse in the course of my fieldwork among Teotitecos.

For the purposes of simplifying, it could be stated that for non-mover Teotitecos the circular labor migrant, who sends remittances and aid for the community, is the prototype of a good migrant. While for many of my long-term migrant informants, the prototype of a good and successful migrant is one that makes an effort to integrate into the host society. Integration seems to be viewd as almost synonymous to success. This appears to reflect U.S. immigration policy in that, while the United States lacks integration policy for immigrants, the tendency to stigmatize migrants and emphatize the criminal nature of illegal migration, results in an image of a good migrant. This status of good migrant can then been viewed to be attainable by simply not misbehaving. Truthfully, the fact that the U.S. integration policy is close to non-existent facilitates the law-abiding migrants becoming the prototypes of successful migrants, eventhough in reality they might remain quite un-integrated to the larger society.

Castañeda (2006) describes her informants who recognize the harsness of many U.S. immigrant laws but still remain understanding to the restrictions. Quite surprisingly, many of my informants too expressed that they understood the U.S laws in the sense that "they have a right to defend their country". Gloria, a retired returnee migrant, shared her migration story with me in a tiny living room of the house she and her husband nowadays own in the outskirts of Teotitlán del Valle. In Gloria's opinion *la migra* are just doing their jobs. She went on to explain: "*The country needs to take care of the country, and we need to respect that. We were in their country, it is not our country!*". Accounts like Gloria's reflect the effects of United States' migrants as aliens discourse (Castañeda 2006). Some migrants, like Gloria, embody this alien discourse. Moreover, the migrants are embodied by this discourse and seem unable to construct a more critical perspective towards it or the law that effect its constitution. To Castañeda's informants, as well as to my informants, the successful migrant seemed to

be one who was able to play by the rules of the host community without severing ties to his or her home community.

What it takes to be a successful migrant is a whole another question altogether. There is a perceivable difference between being good and being successful. Being good is basically what I just described above, being law-abiding and not causing trouble which would lead one into getting under the radar of the police or immigration officials, especially when one is residing without a legal immigrant status. On the other hand, being succesful implies something more advandced and profound. Being good is taken as a prerequisite of being successful, but being good does not guarantee success. There are in fact two views among my informants on being succesful. Some informants stated that being successful equals making a better life for oneself and one's family, while others think that success requires adequate integration into the host society as fas as it is possible. Thus, being successful is valued differerently among migrants. The longer migrants have stayed in their destination the more emphasis they tend to put on integration when evaluating migration success.

Many of my informants had spent long periods of time, even several decades, in the United States. These long-time migrants attributed their success as good migrants to playing by the rules of the destination community. They also draw a clear boundary betweem themselves and the "migrants behaving badly". They distinct themselves from this group of people and explain their faults and difficulties with the characteristics of the bad migrants themselves (both as a group and as individuals). My informants tended to emphasize individual factors in being successful or unsuccessful. I assert that the coercive U.S. immigration control perpetuates migrants' ongoing ties to Mexico, as a way to reproduce an exploitable labor force. These policies, together with the maintenance of strong kin based ties, consolidate the existence of a transborder Teotiteco community. A criminalizing logic of policies towards immigrants tends to reinforce migrants' orientation to Mexico (Andrews 2014). In reality, law enforcement and other institutions often target migrants regardless of their behavior. In other words, they target migrants and treat all migrants as if they were criminals. This often results in migrants finding the police and other official institutions unpredictable and not to be trusted (Andrews 2014, 57). Facing the perennial threat of deportation, migrants tend to

“lay low” and become increasingly invisible and unable to participate fully to become productive members of the host society.

Nevertheless, long-term Teotiteco migrants often presented ideas of self-empowerment. Migration was perceived as hard and dangerous but also as potentially eye-opening and an all-changing experience. An opportunity for one to make something of one-self. These views seem to hold true with the theories of migration imaginaries, in that migrants often tend to emphasize (whether truthfully or not) relatively positive images of migration to the outside (Salazar 2014). Of importance, is to note that none of my informants took migration as a clear path to being empowered. Rather, they perceived that they had been able to empower themselves despite of all the hardships they had encountered. Eventhough, these long-term migrants have been born and raised in Teotitlán themselves and know first-hand the ritual and social customs that characterize communal life as well as the community class stucture connected to inequalities of power, they seems to have adapted a different kind worldview, which places everyone at the same starting line but does not make sure that they have similar odds. Thus, the disfortunate can be blamed for their own disfortune.

My informants’ logic of self-empowerment appears to, again, reflect U.S. immigration policy and the atmosphere in which the migrants live in their host society. Empowerment in the migrants’ view, is not something that can be asserted from outside but to be created or atleast started somewhere within the individual. The migrants think that the society cannot empower them. Thus, climbing the socio-economic ladder and lifting them migrants to another level becomes the individuals’ own responsibility. Hence, the U.S. immigration policy is efficiently reproducing itself. My intention here is not to slander migrants as powerless victims of the individualistic liberal ethic, but to grant the migrants a voice as agents operating in, between and beyond their homes and host communities, without presenting them as mindless puppets of either individualistic or communalist ethic. Rather, these views of self-empowerment seem like continuations of internatinalization of the illegal alien discourse.

For some time now, the concept of cultural citizenhip has been debated among social science and humanities. It has been hailed as an important concept for understanding the ways in which political cultures change and new rights are asserted, claimed and finally

integrated to formal politics. Still, some have dismissed it as irrelevant because it does not deal with the traditional definitions of citizenship (as a vertical relationship between the individual and the state). My view is that in order to understand processes of political participation and incorporation, we need to examine cultural and economic processes as part of the political and the concept of cultural politics can be a part in this effort. First formulated by Renato Rosaldo, the concept suggests an idea of culture where different cultures are equally constitutive of society and expressive of humanity (Rosaldo 1989). Cultural citizenship involves everyday activities through which marginalized groups can claim recognition. This is important to the purposes of this thesis since I wish to emphasize the quotidian struggles of migrants as they operate in the multiple and multisited arenas of their lives. The notion is an alternative to legal citizenship which labels many migrants in the U.S as illegal aliens.

Teotiteco migrants can be understood to retain, maintain and pursue multiple citizenships. These forms of citizenhip include communal indigenous citizenship, Mexican national citizenship, or citizenship of the United States. Holding on to communal citizenship demands participation in communal life through accepted methods of participation defined within the community. The area of national citizenship is also under contestation since the marginalization of indigenous people's, such as Teotitecos, remains an issue in contemporaty Mexican society. Moreover, the struggle for residence or citizenship of the United States posits the migrant with even bigger obstacles. Thus, the processes of gaining and retaining citizenhip arise as multiple, multisited and multifaceted. Here, I wish to emphasize the strategical decisions migrants make in their everyday lives, and the knowlegde they possess to make these decisions. The process of migration between Mexico and the United States has acquired a lopsided nature, where one seems to be profiting at the expense of the other. Nonetheless, I want to give prevalence to the small pragmatic ways of migrants taking advantage of the United States goverment in playing an every-day strategical game.

Almost all the migrants I talked with during my stay in Teotitlán, admitted to some form of dishonesty with their paperwork in the course of their migration process. Most had entered the United States illegally and spent most of their stay as illegal immigrants. Some had gained residency, others even citizenship. Some had been offered residency in the 1986 Amnesty, but had declined it. All had also had trouble getting their

preliminary visas or passports from the Mexican side. Migrants are usually very aware of immigration laws, at least when they have stayed for longer periods in their host communities. Migrants are sliding through the legal frameworks and using the system simoultaneously as the system uses them and their workforce (Castañeda 2006, 100). Migrants' capabilities and knowledge to maneuvre the legal jungle is often downplayed and they are too often reprensented merely through discourses of victimization. Castañeda sees the strategical uses of the law as counter-effects to U.S. policy (ibid.). All in all, the use of these strategies highlights how the senses and questions of citizenship become heightened by migration. Moreover, following Castañeda (2006) I conclude that citizenship should not be regarded as a given universal right *anywhere*, but always ultimately as a site of contestation of who is included and excluded from the community (ibid. 194).

In this final analytical chapter, I have addressed the issues of migrations outcomes by discussing how migration affects both the lives of migrant and non-migrant Teotitecos. By examining debates of tradition and communal life I argued for the multitude of ideas and opinions that constitute the definitions of communal life in Teotitlán del Valle. Moreover, I discussed perceived threats to communal life and qustioned the straightforward connection between migration and decline in traditional custom. In addition, I pondered the effects of migrants' journey on their views on belonging and participation, together with adressing questions of success and empowerment linked to community memberships on both sides of the border. Cultural citizenship, and cultural politics more broadly, emerge as significant tools to analyze Teotiteco migrants' strategical decisionmaking and behaviour. Here, culture becomes politized as a strategical tool for exercising one's agency.

7 Conclusions

My aim has been to trace how communal and cultural practices are shaped by migration and migrants. At the same time, I have investigated how communal and cultural practices and in turn shape patterns of mobility and the migrants. I have studied a specific case of Teotitecos to bring forth insight of how specific local characteristics influence the migration process and how the processes of migration might influence these localities.

In this thesis I examine how processes of transborder migration, and migrants shape cultural and communal practices and how communal and cultural practices, in turn, shape patterns of mobility and the people involved in this mobility, the migrants. This thesis constructs its argument by characterizing and analyzing a case of a specific migration, the Teotiteco one. Throughout the thesis I have investigated the interplay of mobility and rootedness, cultural tradition and transformation. I also explored the role that migrant and nonmigrant households play in their communities through the analysis of traditional reciprocal practices and participation in local governance processes.

I argue that migration should not be thought of as a single phenomenon. Studies that focus either on development of the emigration communities or on (im)migration in the destinations (majority of the scholarship on Mexican migration to the U.S), have a tendency to separate these two processes. This is why these studies cannot sufficiently examine deep interconnections between places. Furthermore, they often miss patterns and politics that can only be understood by investigating relationships between places. Importantly, studying relationships goes beyond things, money or ideas that "flow" or more between these locales. Studies that take relations into account can also be reduced to "impact models" that only consider emigration communities and their members to be empowered through returnee migrants. The point here is that migration does not do anything to anyone or any place by itself. Since migration is not an actor, it cannot carry change to emigration communities or migrants themselves. The possible changes or sense of empowerment occur in complex interplay between migrants, other actors, and their surroundings. This thesis regards relationships at play in migration as sets of unique ties between particular places. Of importance then, is to trace the ways in which political practices and local interactions shape these relationships between places and

how the relationships play out with implications to the migrants communities on both sides of the border.

Migration patterns emerge as crucial in my analysis of Teotiteco migration. Migration pattenrs should be understood as including processes beyond the mere act of migration. By this I mean that migration patterns include the effects of the sending community's political and socio-economic history that precede the act of migration. Furthermore, relations are highlighted in my understanding of migration patterns. By relations I mean relations of kin, but also the relationship between Mexican villages, like Teotitlán del Valle, and the United States.

In this thesis, the emphasis put on migration patterns ultimately lends itself to imagining of migration as a set of relationships. This leads to a specific way of thinking about migration that separates itself from a more traditional view of migration as ultimately the movement of people. Firstly, this study focuses primarily on communities rather than on individual and states. The focus on community ties into the selected level of analysis[12] as this study concentrates on the meso-level of migration analysis. Secondly, this study also looks at how the sending community forges political and communal practices that mediate broader political economic forces. While migration can be seen transforming understandings of political practice, tradition and even wellbeing, the meaning of these new views cannot be understood apart from the historical constitutions of communal life and social interaction.

I argue that, migration cannot be understood as an action without working out the historical processes thought which communities mediate political economic pressures and shape the meaning of movement. This is why this thesis has put emphasis on the sending community's communal practices and discusses the discourses and debates over communal life. The relational approach to migration allows migration to be viewed as a dynamic process where this "dynamism" goes both ways, as community members own actions shape the ongoing process.

[12] Introduced in Chapter 2, based on Thomas Faist (2000).

One could ask, why would the study of the specificity of migration patterns and examining the culture of migration be important or lend significance to the understanding of migration more broadly? Firstly, the articulation of migration patterns helps to build comparative knowledge on migration and helps to de-generalize the views on migration processes. Before, scholars often attributed differences in migration streams only to migrants' social class, their historical timing, or the national political environment. I have attempted to demonstrate how a community, subjected to the same broader historical processes as many others like it, manifest and manage its constraint in a specific way. In other words, to study migration patterns is to trace how different groups of people, facing a shared process of transformation, shape its path. I have given prevalence to patterns, but I also wish to emphasize that after all these patterns are made up of people and more importantly of relationships among people and between places. Moreover, these relationships being the defining features of pattern are also what these patterns are maintained and sustained with.

Oaxacan villages have become organizations which have developed multiple identities to combine different sources of income with complex forms of reproduction in an interconnected global world (Kearney 1996). Some have suggested that further strengthening and institutionalizing transnational ties would protect Oaxacan villages' social institutions and secure their existence in the future (e.g. Cohen 2005; Waterbury 1999). However, this does not mean these institutions would remain unaltered. Attention to ideas of moral economy should always be paid when investigating or guiding the decision making of social collectives. In other words, this means taken into account the role of cultural norms, values and shared histories. By discussing and examining different facets of Teotiteco communal life, I have participated in this discussion of the nature of migration and transnational ties. I have suggested that (kin) relations, and the social norms and views attached to these relations, play a major role in creating and maintaining transnational ties.

For many Teotiteco families, migration has become a central component of a contemporary survival strategy. What is difficult for the community is to gain a balance between customary systems and engagement with the market economy. One concrete opportunity for adjusting better to the changing situations in the emigration community is the expanded role of women. Community cizenship rights and obligations have been

traditionally limited to male residents but there is no legal barrier to greater female participation. This has been encouraged by several empowerment strategies used by more often NGOs working in these communities. While women's participation is growing also in Teotitlán del Valle, another issue remains: if participation is just in the place of the absent migrant husband, does that then impose a kind of "second-class citizenship" on the woman? That does not change the stucture which produces womens' inferiority. These questions have not been in the focus of this thesis, however they have gained increasing attention in the last few years and still demand to be studied further.

If the monetization of cargos becomes further institutionalized as a contribution to participating to life back home and the professionalization of positions continues to gain importance, the ideals of civic reprocity and service will most likely erode. The underpinning principals of the system will then change and the obligation to participate becomes an obgligation in a totally different sense. These changes are likely to affect also the very processes of community making. So far, Teotitecos have been fortunate enough to avoid the greates upheavals that can be caused by migration, thanks to the moderate level of emigration from the town.

What is of importance in here is that the changes and novelties associated to migration, do not need to denote the loss of unique ethnic identity structures and institutions. A shift from the tradional fulfillment of service obligations to a resilient reinvention of identity is possible and to some extent can be detected in the case of Teotitecos. They have already shifted from being a town of mostly subsistence farmers to being a relatively well-established town of self-identified weavers and artesans that employ several strategies to generate income, and at the same time, to perform weaver identity. The reliance on weaving as the principal strategy of generating income is of course debatable. Much depends on conditions and shifts in the larger global economy and the way in which migrants and their home communities engage with the rapidly changing realities of transnationalism and globalization. However, it illustrates the flexibility that the community has been able to maintain during periods of instability and change. Transformations do not emerge through exposure to the United States, but through active communal struggles of wellbeing and more importantly through questions over the definition of wellbeing and "good life".

The reification of cultural difference has emerged along with the questioning of cultural and national borders in processes of globalization and migration. Cultural citizenship suggests both recognition of cultural differences maintained through migration and the opening up of the term citizen to embrace the contributions of all who live in towns and communities, which ever side of the border they might be. Even the people who have never left Teotitlán del Valle enter into a wide array of discources that may be based far away from where they live. The communities where migration is more or less the rule, such as Teotitlán del Valle and many other communities in the state of Oaxaca, are both within and beyond the scope of nation-states. Anthropologists, and particularly ethnography, can help to conceptualize the ways in which transborder communities are negotiating the contradictions of empire.

Lastly, I have argued for the recognition of Mexican migrants as political actors, as well as subjects of the law. This thesis underscores how migrants' stories and the transnational space they inhabit is always already political. The struggle for citizenhip and belonging is taking place in migrants' everyday lives. Migrant stories show how their citizenship and membership is marked by regulatory proscesses (on both sides of the border). These processes tend to alienate them from the national community. Legal frameworks developed by both Mexico and the United States, include and exclude migrants as members of the nation-state. These laws categorize people and this categorization is materialized through the institutions migrants encounter in everyday practices. Nevertheless, migrants develop strategies to maneuvre through these legal spaces and thus manifest their agency.

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